

University of Dundee

## DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

### Purposes, processes and parameters of continuing professional learning

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# Purposes, processes and parameters of continuing professional learning

Kate Martin

Professional Doctorate in Education

University of Dundee

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## Abbreviations

CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CLD	Community Learning and Development
CLDSCS	Community Learning and Development Standards Council (Scotland)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPL	Continuing Professional Learning
DfEE	Department of Education and Employment
DoH	Department of Health
GTCS	General Teaching Council for Scotland
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HND	Higher National Diploma
IRISS	Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services
KSF	Knowledge and Skills Framework
NHS	National Health Service
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
PU	Professional Update
ProPEL	Professional Practice, Education and Learning
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SG	Scottish Government
SSSC	Scottish Social Services Council
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

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The study is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Rev. Frank and Ann Martin.

## Declaration of authorship

I declare that I am the author of this thesis, that all references cited have been consulted by the author, that the work of which the thesis is a record has been carried out by the author, and that the work has not previously been accepted for a higher degree.

Signed

Date 11.4.16



We are confronted by a universe marked by a tremendous fluidity; it won't and can't stand still. It is a universe where fragmentation, splintering and disappearance are the mirror images of appearance, emergence, and coalescence. This is a universe where nothing is strictly determined. Its phenomena should be partly determined via naturalistic analysis, including the phenomenon of men and women participating in the construction of the structures that shape their lives.

(Strauss, 1993:19)

It's not what work we choose to do, the crucial point is doing it with a positive and altruistic motivation.

(Dalai Lama, 13.2.17)

## Abstract

In the widening horizons of 21st century professional practice, a central issue for practitioners is keeping up to date with knowledge and skills for work. Where continuing professional learning is recognised as essential in advancing practice, there are challenges for professionals in the multifaceted ways in which knowledge, skills and ethical practices are developed and implemented in professions. To examine these concerns, this study has considered purposes, processes and parameters of continuing professional learning and its contribution to common good in societies. An initial literature review examined historical trends in the development of professions and professionalism. Educational theories of socially constructed, developmental and ethical learning were investigated as underpinning processes of ongoing learning. The study used a constructionist, interpretative methodology and grounded theory research approach in the collection and analysis of data, which was drawn from documents and semi-structured interviews. To consider motivation and outcomes of study as continuing learning, eighty student documents from a part-time undergraduate programme were analysed. A second source of data concerning wider interests of continuing learning was drawn from semi-structured interviews with twelve practitioners in four Scottish professions. The findings indicated that three contexts for continuing learning, as workplace, profession and academy. Learning across these contexts was for the most part disconnected, creating additional demands for professionals. Benefits of increased academic study indicated a more knowledgeable and skilled workforce, with a caveat of market-led individualised credentialism in response to an expanding demand for higher qualifications. Where enhanced professional learning provided benefits of quality assurance and public safety, this form of learning was also reported as procedural and individualised accountability. Interpersonal communicative action was identified as significant in the workplace, although this was considered more as implicit learning, than as accredited learning in professional and academic contexts. Factors of individualism, accountability and credentialism were noted to have effect on interpersonal workplace learning, which, the study argued, impacted on ethical agency in professions. To address these trends, adaptability, reciprocity and dialogical critical thinking were identified as necessary factors for a continuing professional learning that enhances common good in societies.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

The increasing significance of continuing learning across a widening range of professions, and an expanding range of contexts, aims and approaches of learning were among reasons for selecting this topic as an important area for research. A key concern was that neoliberal managerialism and marketisation of public service professions has contributed to a technical standardisation and systemisation of professional work. This process has been exacerbated by an accelerating rate of change in the use of communicative technologies, which has contributed to increased opportunities for workplace based academic learning, and to individualised practice record-keeping and evaluation. As a result of these political and technological changes, the demands of continuing learning are not only focused on new knowledge and skills for workplace practice, but also on learning as academic accreditation, and as professional accountability. These influences present unprecedented challenges to the ways in which professional practitioners work and learn, and subsequently to the ethical roles and responsibilities professions and professionals carry out on behalf of society.

To introduce the study in this chapter, section 1.1 gives a rationale for selecting the topic and considers why continuing professional learning is of significance to practitioners, professions and policy makers. The research aim and questions, and outline of the study by chapter are presented in sections 1.2 and 1.3. An overview of the research design, introducing the methodological approach, methods and data sample is given in section 1.4. This is followed in 1.5 with the intended contributions of the research, and my personal professional interests in researching the topic are explained in section 1.6. Three main learning contexts of work, profession and academy are described in section 1.7, and continuing learning policies for the four Scottish professions in relation to interview participants are outlined in section 1.8. This chapter concludes in section 1.9 with the aim and structure selected for reviewing literature in the study.

### 1.1 Research rationale

Continuing professional learning has become a key topic of interest in recent decades across a range of UK professions, particularly in public service occupations. Interest in the

topic stems from an expanding rate of change in the knowledge and skills base of professional practices, through technological advancement and globalisation (Schön, 1971; Bauman, 2008). From the influences of neoliberal managerialism and marketisation on learning as accountability and risk aversion (Evetts, 2003; Young & Muller, 2014), ongoing registration in many professions is dependent on evidence-based learning, identified as continuing professional development (CPD). In addition, as more occupations seek professional status, and as austerity measures contribute to job insecurities and competitive employment markets, there is an increased need for mid-career professionals to continually update accredited academic qualifications. These interconnected factors of influence are apparent in profession-specific, national and international policies and research studies. Concern about the topic has been reflected in lifelong learning and economic development policies developed by the Commission of European Communities (CEC, 1998; 2000; 2004) and UK and Scottish governments (DfEE, 1998; SG, 2007; 2010a), with a focus on economic benefits of ongoing learning. In terms of academic research and publication, continuing learning has been a feature of Anglo-American educational and organisational management literature since the 1970s (Schön, 1983, 1987; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Senge, 1990). For these authors, workplace learning approaches incorporated reflection, communities of practice and co-creation of knowledge.

As increasing numbers of occupations become professions, interest in the topic continues to expand, adding to research on issues such as technical reductionism, the impacts of technological advancement and the development of ethical *phronēsis*. International contributions to debates on the topic have been extended through Professional Practice, Education and Learning (ProPEL) International Conferences, organised through the University of Stirling in Scotland. ProPEL posed an investigative rationale and focus of determining the purpose of education for changing professions.

In twenty-first century conditions of rapidly changing societies, transnational knowledge cultures and work arrangements, increasing regulation and audit, restructuring of professions and changing expectations of professionals, we ask:

'What purposes and forms of education are most helpful to support professional learning in changing societies?'

(ProPEL, accessed 26.9.15)

Following these ideas, continuing professional learning has been selected as a topic of growing significance that encompasses a range of debates about the contribution of learning in supporting the changing roles of twenty-first century professionals, especially those in contexts of ethical professionalism and social responsibility. These themes are of particular relevance to professional practitioners who deliver public services on behalf of society, and consequently to members of society who use such services.

In order to investigate why interest in continuing learning has expanded, to paraphrase Cervero (2000:3), the study will broadly consider 'what is the question to which continuing professional learning provides the answer?' Answering this question, Cervero argued, was dependent on three factors: the purposes of ongoing learning; who stands to benefit, and who provides the learning. These ideas follow Freire's (1970) assertion that questions of 'what, how, for whom, and to what end?' should be applied to all educational practices, in order to surface socially constructed political positions of power. Freire's suggestion extends Cervero's ideas, where purposes include outcomes, and processes of 'what' and 'how' consider learning characteristics and methods as well as 'who provides the learning'. To address the authors' questions about 'who benefits' and 'to what end', it seems relevant to consider not only specific contexts for learning, but also parameters between such contexts, in order to determine what boundaries and means of crossing boundaries might occur.

A wide range of contested interests in the topic presents a core problem for the study, where practitioners, providers and policy makers may have different perspectives on the aims, approaches and advantages of ongoing learning. Increasingly, these interests both influence and are influenced by technological mediating processes of learning and of work. For professionals, this means not only learning about work, but about how to use continuously changing technologies in the practice and evaluation of work. As styles of communication and work practices respond to expanding technologies, prioritising learning for practitioners concurs with Bauman's (2008) idea that failing to engage with learning is no longer an option.

Most people would agree today without much prompting that they need to refresh their professional knowledge and digest technical information if they wish to avoid being thrown overboard by fast-accelerating technological progress.

(Bauman, 2008: 92)

In Bauman's view, the pace of technological change is a key underpinning reason why ongoing learning is increasingly essential. This is not a recent concern; the need for ongoing and adaptable learning in professions was highlighted over four decades ago in Anglo-American contexts. Schön's (1971) concern in *Beyond the Stable State* identified a 'crisis in the professions', in recognition that globalisation and technological advancements were changing the knowledge and skills base of professional practices exponentially, and initial training for entry to professions was insufficient. The idea of a career for life was considered then, as now, no longer viable; instead, practitioners might have several careers in the course of their working lives, each involving new knowledge and skill sets. In recent times of economic instability, possibilities of job loss, career change or relocation have become more frequent, which has contributed to learning, in particular advanced academic accredited learning, as a means of future-proofing career progression. This rationale presents an increased need for learning in the workplace as an ongoing process, not only in training for specific practices, but also in developing transferrable skills for further career progression.

To address tensions between communicative and evaluative ongoing learning, the questions for twenty-first century practitioners are similar to those expressed in the mid-1970s. If professional learning involves more than specialist propositional knowledge and technical skills, what does it mean to 'be professional'? In what ways can professional practice respond to the legal and regulatory requirements of professions and at the same time foster autonomy and altruism among professionals, in their task of responding to complex societal issues? Can continuing learning approaches advance both individual and collective capacities in technical, practical and ethical professional practices? In debating these interests, some tensions for practitioners may have arisen, not so much around a general principle that continuing learning is necessary or beneficial, but in relation to differing purposes and processes of learning and who serves to benefit. In professions, these

tensions are merged in a necessity for practitioners to keep up-to-date with increasing rates of change in knowledge and practices. As Billett explained,

maintaining and improving individuals' capacity to be effective in and across their work lives is held to be central to securing individual, local and national economic and societal well-being.

(Billett, 2010:1; OECD, 2000b)

In this respect, individual learning is contexted in outcomes of more effective and efficient work, of benefit to both economic goals and towards the good of society. But are these latter goals mutually compatible? Does learning designed for economic development ensure ethical responsibility for societies? Or, for that matter, vice versa? In recent European and UK policies, (CEC, 1998; 2000; 2004; DfEE, 1998; SG, 2007; 2010a) societal well-being has been interpreted through a lens of economic growth. In this perspective, ongoing learning in the workplace has been perceived to have universal benefit to individuals, professions and societies, with anticipated outcomes of more knowledgeable, more adaptable individual practitioners, more highly skilled workforces and consequent economic expansion. However, the methods of achieving such economic benefits through knowledge and skills development may have tended towards reductionist rather than emergent approaches to learning. European strategic policy on lifelong learning (CEC, 1994), reinforcing the insufficiency of an initial 'once-and-for-all' qualification, recognised the need to support continuing learning across workforces, but couched this intent in a reductionist requirement of technical standardisation.

Preparation for life in tomorrow's world cannot be satisfied by once-and-for-all acquisition of knowledge and knowhow. All measures must therefore necessarily be based on the concept of developing, generalising and systematising lifelong learning and continuous training.

(CEC, 1994: 146)

Key challenges for practitioners may stem from this idea of 'generalising and systematising' ongoing professional learning. This approach might be wholly appropriate in work that focuses on technical knowledge and skills and requires consistency and systematic

precision. It may be less appropriate in practice that involves engaging with complex social situations where practices involve reviewing dilemmas with participants and colleagues, and making reflective deliberations based on ethical principles. Schön's seminal 'swamp' analogy summarised these concerns.

In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground overlooking a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solution through the use of research based theory and technique. In the swampy lowlands, problems are messy and confusing and incapable of technical solution. The irony of this situation is that the problems of the high ground tend to be relatively unimportant to individuals or society at large, however great their technical interest may be, while in the swamp lie the problems of greatest human concern.

(Schön, 1987:3)

In Schön's analogy, which originally referred to university-based inquiry methods, questioning of the tension between rigour and relevance in research applied equally to processes of continuing learning. Following Schön's argument, if complex socially contexted practice is quantified in specific and measurable units of learning and evaluation, to what extent does this challenge the relationships between learning and ethical practice?

In addition, Tett (2010) argued that a reductionist approach may have contributed to unproblematised responses to learner and workforce development needs, where a standardised approach of 'one size fits all' has been applied, without adequate recognition of wide ranging differences in practitioner learning needs, abilities, contexts and capacities. A lack of recognition of differences in learner needs and contexts may affect ways in which practitioners learn, or indeed fail to learn, both individually and collectively, in workplace contexts.

Moreover, the CEC (1994) notion of 'standardisation and generalisation' may affect ways in which interpretation, deliberation and critical analysis are exercised in addressing ethical concerns in the workplace. If systematised learning approaches have an impact on the ways practitioners learn from, through and for work, it follows that this could have a detrimental effect on socio-cultural relationships of the workplace and subsequently on principles that



underpin the contribution of work to societal good. Conversely, professional learning that fosters participative, transferable and adaptable skills might strengthen moral capacities in addressing the increasingly complex challenges of twenty-first century societies.

From Schön's perspective in the 1970s and 80s USA, it was argued that participative and interconnected continuing learning could help to bridge the widening gap between expanding needs of societies and the expanding body of knowledge and skills that the professional might draw on to meet such needs. In 1971, Schön wrote: 'no established institution in our society now perceives itself as adequate to the challenges that face it' (1971:17). He argued that unprecedented challenges arose from three trends that had affected mid-twentieth century society in the USA: intolerance of an economic drive towards consumerism and concurrent reduction in spend on public services; dissatisfaction with disempowerment of disadvantaged groups of people, and a demand for the reinstatement of a focus on moral goals and values. These issues are still relevant, if not more so, to twenty-first century professional practices in Scotland, where UK austerity measures, and widespread adoption of neoliberal managerialist approaches (Evetts, 2003; Young & Muller, 2014) echo Schön's 1971 concerns. Considering flexible continuing learning approaches as a solution, Schön saw potential for renewal of democratic participation as a means of addressing such tensions: 'There is an impetus ... against economic materialism, uniformity, institutional rigidity, centralisation and toward a way of life signalled by terms like participation, openness and a new ethic of human relationships' (Schön, 1971:16-17). In Schön's view, concerns of materialism and standardisation could be addressed in a continuing learning that enhanced ethical and communicative participative relationships in public life. Yet, over forty years later, these concerns are still apparent and unresolved.

The influences of neoliberal managerialism in the later part of the twentieth century mean that Schön's suggestion of participation and openness in learning are valid for contemporary professionals. Four decades later, Schön's (1971) ideas were echoed in Bauman's (2008) argument that in a 'liquid-modern' fluid and ever-changing complexities of the twenty-first century, education and learning must be not only continuous and lifelong but inclusive of democratic citizenship.

Not only do technical skills need to be continually refreshed, not only does job-focussed education need to be lifelong. The same is required and with greater urgency ... for education in citizenship ... democratic politics cannot survive for long the citizens' passivity out of political ignorance and indifference.

(Bauman, 2008: 92)

For both Schön and Bauman, necessary factors of continuing learning for professional practitioners included engagement with and participation in learning for purposes of adaptability and ethical practice in a changing world. Bauman's imperative was that without learning for participative change in public life as well as in a context of work, collaborative democratic processes in societies might be unsustainable. The significance of democratic structures for professions are that within their membership organisations, to a greater or lesser extent, professionals construct and represent the aims, principles and values of their practice. This followed Durkheim's (1958) argument that a fundamental condition of professional ethics is the collective nature of membership in professions as societal structures, where participants collaboratively determine the tenets of good work. In the study, the role of participative learning in fostering a collective professional moral compass has informed an interest not only in trends and in characteristics of continuing learning, but also in the purposes and impacts of learning for societal benefit.

To set out the means of investigating these concerns, the research aim and questions are presented in the next section.

## 1.2 Research aim and questions

The key aims of the research are to determine ways in which purposes, processes and parameters of continuing professional learning can impact on common good in societies. To achieve these aims, specific research questions concerning learning motivations, outcomes, characteristics, contexts, and boundaries and synergies between contexts have been applied to a review of literature and to empirical data drawn from the analysis of documents and of semi-structured interviews with practitioners from Scottish professions. These are:

1. What historical and contemporary trends contribute to understanding the concepts of professions, professionalism and professional learning?
2. What are the key characteristics and contexts of continuing professional learning?
3. What are the motivations for and outcomes of continuing professional learning?
4. What boundaries and synergies can be determined between continuing learning contexts?
5. What necessary factors can be determined for continuing professional learning as a means of enhancing common good in societies?

In relation to the concept of 'common good', in Scotland, 'inclusion, equality and social justice' are central to public life (Scottish Government, 2007). For this study, these three principles are taken as key tenets of the term, and it is anticipated that 'necessary factors' might be derived from purposes, processes and/or parameters of learning. An explanation of these terms, and relationships between three key aims of the research and specific questions are outlined below and illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Key research aim and questions

**Purposes:** this term includes motivations for and outcomes of continuing learning, and relationships between these factors.

**Processes:** this term represents the characteristics of learning used to achieve outcomes. Characteristics are connected to contexts, which guide the policies and provisions of learning. In the study, three main learning contexts are described as work, academy and profession.

**Parameters:** this term is used to denote any boundaries and synergies which may occur within and between contexts for learning.

### 1.3 Outline of chapters

To address the research questions, interpretations and trends of continuing professional learning are considered in Chapter 2, which discusses changing terminologies of continuing learning and development (Edwards & Nicoll, 2006; Timperley, 2011; Grundy & Robinson, 2004). The chapter outlines key theories of motivation for learning (Maslow, 1943; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Pellegrino & Thomasma, 1993) and identifies contemporary characteristics of continuing learning (Kennedy, 2005, 2014; Cervero, 2000; Coffield, 2000). Chapter 2 then reviews contemporary challenges of performativity and credentialism (Lyotard, 1984; Bills & Brown, 2011; Billett, Harteis & Gruber, 2014). Chapter 3 considers historical trends of professions and professionalism, to determine what changes in ideas about professions have influenced ways in which practitioners learn through and for ongoing professional practice (inter alia, Eraut, 1994, 2014; Evetts; 2003, 2011, 2013).

In Chapter 4, mediated and social constructed theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Leont'ev, 1978) are examined, together with the significance of contexts for learning in Engeström's (2009) concept of activity theory. Developmental, staged learning through a series of levels (Bateson, 1972) is discussed next, with particular consideration of the role played by contradiction. Classic and contemporary models of ethical learning (Aristotle, in Cahn, 1990; Kohlberg, 1986) conclude this chapter. The purpose of investigating these theories is to consider the significance of socially constructed mediation and activity contexts for learning, of contradictions generated by crossing boundaries between contexts and of developmental processes of ethical learning. Chapter 5 sets out the rationale and processes of the research methodology selected for the study. Data analysis of documents and semi-structured interviews are reported in Chapters 6 and 7 respectively. Findings in response to the research questions are presented in Chapter 8, followed by discussion and conclusion of the implications of key findings in Chapter 9. The study concludes in Chapter 10 with a reflective account of the limitations and achievements of the research.

## 1.4 Overview of research design

This section introduces the research design for the study, key points of which are outlined in Figure 2. The rationale, design and strategy for the study are further explained in Chapter 5.

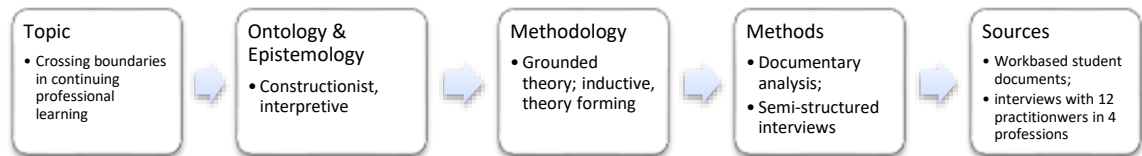


Figure 2 Outline of research design

To address the questions set out in the previous section, a constructionist ontological perspective was selected, which proposes that through interaction, actors construct social phenomena, and these are continually constructed and reconstructed (Bryman, 2008). This view informed the selection of an interpretivist epistemology, where knowledge is subjectively interpreted by participants in relation to their lived experience of particular contexts. The selection of a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014) was considered relevant to a study that sought to determine practitioners' experiences of learning, and through inductive data collection and analysis, construct substantive theory about contemporary continuing learning in Scottish professions. Advantages of grounded theory for this study included its location in a qualitative paradigm; the potential for purposive sampling; a subjective interpretative construction of experience on the part of participants and myself as the researcher, and a flexible process of iterative development and comparison of emergent ideas (Sarantakos, 2013:133). Data collection and analysis respond to grounded theory stages of open, axial and selective coding processes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998) in relation to the three themes of the research aim, and research questions detailed in section 1.2.

## 1.5 Contributions of the research

Where continuing professional learning has been investigated extensively in contexts of education and medicine (eg Edwards, 2010; Eraut, 2014; Hodges et al., 2011; Monrouxe, Rees & Hu, 2011), the study will broaden cross-disciplinary understanding about

professional learning, by examining and cross-referencing ideas about continuing learning in four professional contexts of community education, social work, nursing and education in Scotland. In extending the area of practice interest, the study will determine to what extent the selected professions have distinctive or shared processes of continuing professional learning, in relation to the research aims and questions.

The study will identify any boundaries between three learning contexts of work, academy and profession that could restrict interaction or development, and will consider approaches that might facilitate boundary crossing. Through consideration of necessary factors for common good, the study will contribute to understanding of the ways in which continuing learning can enhance integrated knowledge, skills and ethical capacities for individual, workforce, professional and societal benefit.

In the next section, a reflexive rationale for selecting the topic is presented.

## 1.6 Researcher interest

In this section, my reflexive professional interest in the topic is explained from three perspectives: the underpinning values and principles of my professional experience; a practice context in higher education; and my professional remit at the time of the study. A personalised, subjective approach is used in the section to outline these interests.

First, the professional principles which underpinned my practice were based on experience of working in the field of Scottish community education (now termed Community Learning and Development), first as a practitioner, then as team leader and subsequently as a lecturer. In Scotland, community education is a process that involves working with people in collaboratively determining, challenging and redressing the balance of socio-economic and cultural concerns of disadvantage or discrimination. Values and principles of 'self-determination, inclusion, empowerment, working collaboratively and promotion of learning as a lifelong activity' (CLDSCS, accessed 3.4.12) underpin the practice, which involves either separate or interwoven strands of community development, youth work and adult education. The collaborative and co-constructive nature of my practice experience influenced the selection of a constructionist, interpretive methodology for the research, which in turn

informed a constructivist grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2014) for collecting and analysing data. In particular, a personal and professional commitment to accessible, flexible lifelong learning and to collaborative, participative and ethical practice led to an interest in the topic as a general principle of individual and collective capacity building for societal benefit.

Second, in terms of my practice context as a lecturer in higher education, the study was carried out in a Scottish University where professional qualifying programmes of social work, education and community education were located, and where collaboration across these professional disciplines was encouraged. This presented an opportunity to investigate ways in which continuing learning was promoted by these three professions, both in the workplace and through academic study with the university. To broaden the scope of the inquiry, links with academic and field based practitioners in nursing enabled the addition of a further professional interest to the study.

Third, the aim of the professional doctorate was that practitioners would research an aspect of their practice to enhance knowledge and understanding of a particular topic of benefit to their field. At the time of the study, as I was the programme leader of an undergraduate degree in professional development, investigation of the topic was central to my own learning goals in terms of strengthening understanding about the aims, motivations, processes and impacts of professional learning. Determining the trends and characteristics of workplace learning could contribute to aligning the processes of academic study to learner interests. Considering factors which created boundaries or synergies between learning contexts could enable aspects of challenge and cohesion to be examined, together with the outcomes and impacts that professional learning might have in relation to effective practice and in responding to changing societal needs. It was anticipated that a better understanding of these themes would inform my ability to contribute to programme evaluation and development processes, through dialogue with students as learning participants, with colleagues as providers and with programme board members as representative of professions. In addition, locating the research across four professional disciplines aimed to broaden collegiate understanding and capacity to expand collaborative opportunities for

continuing professional learning in the school and university. These professional interests have contributed to the selection of the topic and the methodological approach and methods for the study, which were introduced in section 1.3 and are explained further in Chapter 5.

In terms of personal interest, my parental family included a teacher, a minister of religion, a social worker and myself as community worker, then lecturer. As representatives of different professions in a family setting, it was possible to learn about and respect the role of other professionals, and to recognise that where each profession had different knowledge, skills and responsibilities, they shared a common aim of societal good. Of relevance to the latter aim, my father had changed career from law to the church, finding aspects of legal practice to be more concerned with private gain than public good. These personal experiences, coupled with growing concern about enacted and learned professionalism, a seeming decline in interpersonal dialogue and of professional autonomy in work, have underpinned my interest in the topic.

It is recognised that practitioners come to professions with existing sets of norms and values, socially constructed through interaction within and between kinship groups, socio-cultural communities and networks (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), and that ongoing learning continues to relate to these interactions and influences. This section has introduced some of my personal influences, which have some bearing on the selection of the topic and research approaches.

Next, three main contexts for continuing learning have been selected for investigation in the research, and these are explained in the following section.

### 1.7 Learning contexts: work, profession and academy

For this study, three main contexts for continuing learning are described as work, profession and academy. These contexts emerged from early data collection with five practitioners, and represent a first stage of constructing grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). Where the literature and research plan had initially focused on boundary crossing between work and academy as two key locations of continuing learning, from initial semi-structured interviews, it was apparent that practitioners were required to record and evidence their continuing



professional learning, and to complete competency frameworks for purposes of regulation and registration. For this reason, a third learning context of 'profession' was included in the study. This modification is explained further in Chapter 5.

In Figure 3, a central position held by the practitioner as learner is shown in relationship to three continuing learning contexts of work, academy and profession.

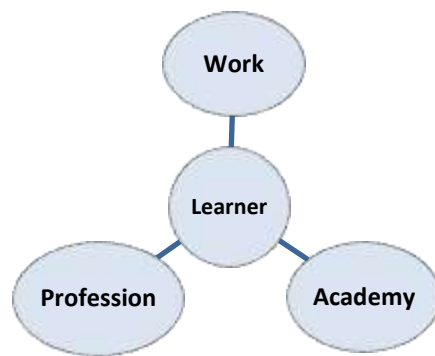


Figure 3 Three contexts of continuing professional learning

'Profession' in this instance indicates the location of continuing professional learning provided or required by professional organisation. This might include formal and informal learning provision, or as indicated previously, self-evaluation for purposes of quality assurance and registration. As academic study in this instance concerns for the most part full-time professional practitioners, the term 'academy' is used here to describe continuing professional learning as workplace-based, part-time academic study, accredited by a higher education institution. Continuing learning in the workplace, involving both independent and interpersonal learning, is described here in a context of 'work'. This may take the form of formal courses, structured learning groups, mentoring schemes, or as informal, tacit learning derived from everyday workplace interactions.

In designating these three contexts for learning, it was useful to reconsider Cervero's (2000) questions of 'who provides the learning?' If the three settings have different expectations about the purpose of learning, for example in work, keeping up-to-date with changing workplace knowledge and skills; for the profession, quality assurance and accountability; or for the academy, accreditation of individual academic achievement, how might this affect the

central position of the professional learner? Does continuing learning in these three contexts place additional pressures on practitioners to meet an increasing range of learning outcomes for different purposes, or can learning meet more than one set of outcomes? Do these contexts have distinct boundaries between learning policies and processes, or can learners make connections across the three contexts? Moreover, if outcomes are different, what impact might this have on practitioners' perspectives of 'being professional'? There may be links between contexts that enable synergies in learning; alternatively, there may be learning processes and outcomes unique to each setting that create challenges for professional learners, their workplaces and professions. To examine these concerns, potential boundaries between learning contexts are considered in the literature (Eraut, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978; Engeström, 2001; 2009) and in empirical research for the study. In the next section, policies which relate to the four professions of interview participants are explained.

## 1.8 Professional policy contexts

In this section, an overview of the continuing professional learning policy contexts for four professions is introduced, in response to the research aim of determining purposes and processes of continuing learning. The study focuses on four Scottish professions that operate under general headings of community education, education, nursing and social work. It is acknowledged that each professional area has specific subdivisions, but for this study, the overall professional membership organisation is of key interest. Each of the four professions in Scotland is represented by a professional agency that has a remit for regulation and maintaining standards to uphold quality of practice, in the public interest. In comparison of the registration requirements, education, social work and nursing had mandatory professional development and review processes, entitled respectively Professional Update (PU), Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL), Professional Development Planning and Review (PDPR). In community education, registration and professional learning requirements were not mandatory at the time of the study. Across these professions, there were common aims for learning, for example to provide quality of service, to assess and minimise risk and to advance practice capabilities. Despite general similarities, processes of the identification and measurement of quality were carried out in

different ways in each profession, with variations of anticipated outcomes. This contributed to a rationale for selecting four different professional contexts in the study. To compare ways in which continuing professional learning is organised, a summary of the four professional agencies, their key continuing professional development (CPD) policy documents and requirements is presented in Table 1, then explained in relation to each profession.

Professional Agency	CPD Requirement	Mandatory Registration	CPD days/hrs	CPD policy documents
Community Learning & Development Standards Council (Scotland) (CLDSCS)	Continuing Professional Development	No	35 hours per year	Code of Ethics (CLDSCS, 2010) CPD Strategy (CLDSCS, 2011)
General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)	Professional Update	Yes	35 hours per year	GTCS Professional Code; Professional Standards (GTCS, 2012, 2014)
National Health Service (NHS); Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)	Professional Development Planning and Review (PDPR)	Yes	35 hours per year (5 days)	NHS Knowledge & Skills Framework (DoH, 2004a); PREP Handbook (NMC, 2011) Professional Code (NMC, 2015)
Scottish Council for Social Services (SSSC)	Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL)	Yes	15 days or 90 hours per year	Continuous Learning Framework (SSSC/IRISS, 2008); PRTL Guidance, (SSSC, 2011); Codes of Practice (SSSC, 2014)

Table 1 Four professions: CPD requirements

### 1.8.1 Community Education

For community education, the professional context in Scotland was renamed Community Learning and Development (CLD) in 1995. The profession was formed in Scotland with the 1975 Alexander Report, which combined youth work and adult education services as community education services, based in local authorities and as voluntary sector agencies. Undergraduate degree qualifications were introduced in the mid to late 1990s in three Scottish Colleges of Education, to supplement existing diplomas and postgraduate qualifications. Academic qualifications in Community Education, Community Learning and Development (or equivalent), endorsed by the professional agency then became a standardised requirement for practice, particularly in public sector local authorities. The CLD Standards Council for Scotland (CLDSCS) introduced registration for the profession in 2013 as a recommendation, rather than a requirement for practice. As a professional area of work

that incorporates both voluntary and public sector practitioners, registration had two levels of membership. Full membership involved a CLD or equivalent qualification and relevant post qualifying experience; associate membership was open to volunteers, students, or other allied professionals. The Council recommended, rather than required, that members complete an online CPD record through the CLDSCS 'i-develop' portal. The 2011 CLDSCS strategy, *Continuous Professional Development: A Learning Culture for the Community Learning and Development Sector in Scotland*, focused on the development of an inclusive culture for learning which involved both participants and practitioners in organisations and services. As in other professions, adopting ethical codes of practice were a requirement of registration. A code of values and principles based on 'self-determination, inclusion, empowerment, working collaboratively and promotion of learning as a lifelong activity' (CLDSCS, accessed 3.4.12) formed the basis of guidelines for effective practice. Ethical practice codes based on 'empowerment, equity, co-operation and a duty of care' were detailed specifically in the *Code of Ethics* (CLDSCS, 2010).

### 1.8.2 Education

In Scottish teaching, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) is responsible for regulation, for ensuring that professional standards are upheld, that practice codes are maintained and core values are implemented across the profession. The values, described as central to all standards for practice, are 'social justice; integrity; trust and respect, and professional commitment' (GTCS; accessed 22.4.14). The Professional Update as evidence-based self-evaluation, appraisal and registration process, linked to professional standards at different levels, was introduced by the General Teaching Council for Scotland in 2012, for implementation across the profession by 2014. A *Code of Professionalism and Conduct* (GTCS, 2012a:3) set out the parameters of accountability for the profession on behalf of society: 'the Council has a duty to regulate teachers in the public interest and, in so doing, is accountable to the public and the profession for maintaining standards and ensuring that teachers are fit to teach'. With fitness for practice and allaying public risk as a core duty, the code included aspects of responsibility; of ensuring professionalism and trust; of maintaining professional competence through the standards for registration, and ensuring that principles

of equality and diversity underpins professional practice. The code stressed that teachers should 'refresh and develop...knowledge and skills through Continuing Professional Development and maintenance of reflective good practice' (GTCS, 2012a:11). The codes of practice and values then linked to the standards for registration, which are concerned with 'professional knowledge and understanding; professional skills and abilities; and professional values and personal commitment' (ibid). Standards were divided into four types: Standards for Registration; for Career-long learning; for Leadership and Management and for Headship. These changes emerged from the 2011 Donaldson Report, *Teaching Scotland's Future*, which reviewed initial education and early career induction, and emphasised the importance of a comprehensive and connected continuing learning for Scottish teachers. The report reinforced the implementation of the McCrone report (SEED, 2000) requirement of 35 hours of CPD per year, and recognised that continuing learning progression beyond induction was disjointed and lacked evidence of impact. The report linked continuing learning to distributive leadership roles, not only in promoted posts in sections or schools, but in relation to working groups or curriculum development initiatives. Following the introduction and subsequent withdrawal of an innovative Master's level Chartered Teacher scheme, government investment of £1.3 million for Scottish teachers to study for Master's qualifications was announced in 2014, with an aim of 'strengthening the workforce and helping teachers to advance their professional learning, in response to increasingly ambitious demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' (Education Scotland, 2014).

### 1.8.3 Nursing

For nurses, the Nursing and Midwifery Council required that post-registration education and practice standards (PREP) were adhered to and evidenced in order to maintain high standards of healthcare, and to 'safeguard the health and well-being of the public' (NMC, 2011). These standards, set in place in 1995 and updated in 2015, were linked to a three-yearly registration process, latterly termed 'revalidation' (NMC, 2015). For all NHS practitioners, the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF), introduced in 2004, allows practitioners to link their professional learning with career development, through a process of Personal Development Planning and Review (NMC, 2011). This mandatory process is

closely linked to professional learning and appraisal, with benefits of potential for promotion or salary increase through its alignment with responsibilities, salary grades and career progression. Although nursing was in 2013 the most recent of the four professions to adopt degree entry, stemming from Project 2000 training reforms, nursing has a long history of both quality assurance and of degree-level training. Nursing registration in the UK was established with the Nurses Registration Act of 1919, the same year that saw the establishment of the Ministry of Health. In academic terms, the University of Edinburgh was the first European institution to offer a degree in nursing in 1972. The 1970s Briggs committee reported on nurse training and professionalisation, and this led to increased salaries and training opportunities. From a UK wide Council (UKCC) set up in 1983, the new Nursing and Midwifery Council was established in 2002, with responsibility for ongoing learning devolved to regional NHS boards. Updated validation guidance for members, to be implemented from April 2016 (NMC, 2015:1) was based on four key professional standards: 'to prioritise people; practice effectively; preserve safety and promote professionalism and trust'.

Members of the NMC require to be revalidated every three years, through a process of practicing in accordance with required codes, undertaking CPD and preparing online evidence for validation. A key change in the new guidelines was the inclusion of a 'confirmer', as a senior or managerial practitioner who reviewed and endorsed the recorded evidence of continuing learning and development of practice with each member. As an example of the historical traditions of professional commitment in nursing, on graduation, nurses undertake an oath similar to the medical Hippocratic Oath, which pledges their commitment 'to maintain and elevate the standards of the profession', to adhere to ethical practices of doing no harm, of patient confidentiality and of collaboration with other practitioners.

#### 1.8.4 Social Work

Social work in Scotland operates a Continuous Learning Framework (CLF), which stemmed from *Changing Lives: Report of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Social Work Review* (Scottish Executive, 2006). In the framework, four areas of capabilities were determined: 'knowledge, skills,

values and understanding; qualifications and training; personal capabilities, and organisational capabilities' (SSSC/IRISS, 2008). Personal capabilities offered a distinction between self-management and relationship building skills, described as social and emotional intelligence, and organisational skills as capabilities that determine the culture and conditions in the workplace. As in Scottish teaching, particular emphasis was placed on opportunities to develop distributed leadership capabilities in order to strengthen this capacity across the social services workforce. The CLF framework (ibid) aimed to incorporate recognition of informal and experiential learning with performance measurement and qualifying training. What was distinctive about the CLF was that it not only focused on the learning goals of individuals, but also recognised the role of employers in supporting practitioner learning.

The idea of the framework was to support a range of learning, recognition and accreditation processes, which would then contribute to Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) and to mandatory SSSC professional registration requirements outlined in Codes of Practice. For social work, the Codes of Practice form part of wider legislative requirements and employer procedures, mandatory for practitioners. To address this and ensure that practitioners were fully supported, the updated 2014 Codes of Practice, as with the CLF, combined guidance and the responsibilities of employers and practitioners in one document (SSSC, 2014). The practice codes focused on trust and respect for the interests and independence of service users and carers; maintenance of rights while ensuring protection from harm; and ensuring 'public trust and confidence in social services' (SSSC, 2014). The codes stressed that social service workers should 'be accountable for the quality of their work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills' (SSSC, 2014:20).

From this overview of CPD processes required by professional agencies, strategic continuing learning trends across the four professions were twofold: first, in the introduction of benchmarking frameworks for professional registration linked to standards of competence, and second, a move in responsibility for ongoing learning from provision of in-service learning opportunities by the employer to evaluative accountability on the part of practitioner.

To conclude this chapter, the approach to a review of literature for the study is explained. Literature on continuing professional learning, historical perspectives of professions and professionalism, and theories about socially constructed, developmental and ethical learning approaches are then considered in Chapters 2, 3 & 4.

### 1.9 Aim and structure of the literature review

In this section, an overview of the approach to selection and review of literature in the study is given. The introduction of a literature review rationale at this stage relates to original requirements of the professional doctorate, where this review preceded the selection and justification of a constructivist grounded theory approach for the study. The relationship between the latter approach and reviewing literature is discussed in Chapter 5.

The general aim of a literature review is to determine the main ideas about a topic, through investigation and discussion of the primary definitions, theories, debates, and origins of the field of study (Hart, 1998). According to Hart, a thesis may have two kinds of literature, one that discusses literature on the topic, the other a methodological debate about the research approach. The latter outlines the ontological and epistemological perspectives for the area of interest and addresses ways in which knowledge is organised and structured. Both literatures underpin this study, where ideas about the study topics are discussed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, and research methodologies are considered in Chapter 5.

In terms of literature on the key topics, Ridley (2012: 6) described two kinds of literature review as 'dedicated' or 'recursive'. A dedicated review, the author explained, would begin in the introduction and continue in one or more subsequent chapters. In some fields, a complete literature review might form an initial, discrete chapter in a study. A recursive review, Ridley explained, would be appropriate for grouping together a range of different research topics in one study, where an overview of literature would be discussed in the introduction and then in relation to new topics in each chapter. Two other forms of literature review, Ridley argued, were less relevant to doctoral theses: a stand-alone review, which does not involve data collection or analysis, or a systematic review of literature, commonly used to analyse literature in a specific field in order to inform policy. For this study, Ridley's



(2012) idea of a dedicated literature review has been selected to explore a range of themes which relate to the research aim of determining purposes, processes and parameters of continuing professional learning. To achieve this, an initial literature review, undertaken from 2010 to 2012 on topics of professions, professionalism and professional learning, was amended and updated to form Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the present study.

To determine the scope of literature on key topics and sub-topics for the study, a series of online library searches was made, using the key terms 'professional', 'professionalism', 'continuing professional learning', 'continuing professional development' and 'professional learning'. Searches for sub-topics of managerialism, performativity, credentialism and professional ethics were then made. Indexes searched included the British Education Index; Australian Education Index; the Applied Social Sciences Index (ASSIA); Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC); SCOPUS; Current Educational Research in the UK (CERUK); Intute and Education-line. Journal articles, conference papers and academic texts provided key sources of literature. The main timeframe for the search was 1990 to 2015, although a non-restrictive time frame was used for the section on historical perspectives, which allowed inclusion of classic texts in the fields of sociology, education and philosophy. Deliberative selections of literature on continuing professional learning and development were made across disciplines of nursing, social work, education and community education.

This concludes the introductory chapter of the study, which has presented an overview of the rationale, interests and research approaches for the study. Next, the purposes, processes and parameters of continuing professional learning are considered in three literature chapters, the first of which examines characteristics and challenges that underpin contemporary continuing professional learning.

## Chapter 2 Continuing professional learning or development?

This chapter considers ideas about continuing professional learning in literature, beginning with ways in which it is defined. The chapter has three sections; first, 2.1 introduces different terms used to describe continuing professional learning and how these terms relate to expected outcomes. In section 2.2, aims and characteristics of continuing learning are considered in contexts of profession, work and academy. This section considers debates about learning as professional accountability; as workforce development and as academic accreditation, and discusses the expansion of technological mediation as a medium for professional learning. In section 2.3, ideas about motivations for continuing learning as extrinsic, intrinsic (Maslow, 1943; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and altruistic (Pellegrino & Thomasma, 1993) are considered. In the study, the term ‘continuing professional learning’ is used as a generic description. Where ‘continuing professional development’ or ‘continuing professional education’ are used in literature, these terms have been retained in the context of their application.

From an initial scoping of the policy documents for the four professions, (GTCS, 2012, 2014; CLDSCS, 2010, 2011; SSSC, 2008, 2014; NMC, 2011, 2015), which were outlined in section 1.8, a range of interpretations of the goals and practices of continuing learning were determined. These included economic workforce development; standardisation and regulation; advancing knowledge, skills and capacity and ensuring quality of practice. Across the four professions, characteristics of continuing learning included self-directed study, attendance at courses or conferences and completion of a CPD portfolio which evidenced learning. The position of academic study as continuing learning was less clear in professional policies. In some cases, this was financially supported by employers, in others, study was seen as a personal concern. This raised questions about tensions between individual and organisational outcomes of study, which are further explored in the empirical research.

In strategic policies, the terms used by different Scottish professions for ongoing learning have undergone changes in recent years. Where the term ‘continuing professional development’ (CPD) has been used across professions for several decades, there has been

a move towards the idea of 'learning' rather than development. These changes are explored in the next section, beginning with discussion of the term 'continuing professional development'.

## 2.1 Defining terms

The ways of defining continuing professional development seem as varied as the occupations that use the term. Not only is the composite term contested, but also the constituent parts of the term are contested ideas. As Guest (2004) suggested, 'we all think that we know what the words 'continuing', 'professional' and 'development' mean, until we come to define them' (cited in Friedman & Phillips 2004:363). To clarify general ideas of CPD, the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) offered this interpretation.

Continuing professional development is the conscious updating of professional knowledge and the improvement of professional competence throughout a person's working life. It is a commitment to being professional, keeping up-to-date and continuingly seeking to improve.

(CIPD, 2000:1)

Where this definition was specific about knowledge update, improvement, and a commitment to 'being professional', it failed to explain what 'being professional' might involve, and who or what is to be improved. A further definition offered by the Institute for Learning (IfL) addressed these questions, explaining benefits for both the overall practice and the learners as both participants in and recipients of practice. In this, CPD involved 'maintaining, improving and broadening relevant knowledge and skills in a subject or vocational specialism and in teaching and training methods so that it has a positive impact on practice and the learner experience' (IfL, 2010:4). In the context of education in New Zealand, a shift from 'development' to 'learning' followed Timperley's (2011) argument that development had become associated with something imposed by others, whereas learning was self-generated, inquiring, critical and transformative.

The term 'professional development' has taken on connotations of delivery of some kind of information to teachers in order to influence their practice whereas

'professional learning' implies an internal process in which individuals create professional knowledge through interaction with this information in a way that challenges previous assumptions and creates new meanings.

(Timperley, 2011: 4-5)

Conversely, it could be argued that development represents a process of active change in practice, whereas learning involves a process of change in personal knowledge and skills, which might, or might not be applied to activate changes in practice. In Freire's (1970) idea of praxis, which he defined as a process of reflection and action, the application of learning to practice was necessary for transformative change. Similarly, Grundy and Robinson (2004) connected the purposes of ongoing professional learning as 'extension, growth and renewal', for practitioners and for the contexts of practice. In this interpretation, the authors suggested that 'extension' concerned acquiring new knowledge and skills; 'growth' represented the development of expertise, and 'renewal' related to transformation of practice. In this description, both learning and development were understood to include not only ongoing acquisition of new knowledge and skills, but through application, the growth and transformation of self, and of participants and recipients in the processes of practice.

In education, Porritt (2014) agreed that use of the term 'learning' in itself was insufficient in changing and improving practice. Citing Timperley's (2011:2) problem that 'much professional development has little meaning for teachers', Porritt argued that learning as acquisition of knowledge was not enough, it was 'putting knowledge to work' as development that made a difference. Campbell and Levin (2012) had used this term in their view that applying research to policy or practice was challenging and required 'specific efforts'.

The seemingly simple objective of putting knowledge to work is in fact very difficult to attain...it is still difficult to change organisational practices to be consistent with research knowledge...research findings do not automatically inform or shape policy or practice and without specific efforts to strengthen these connections, even the most powerful research evidence will have only limited effect.

(Campbell and Levin, 2012, cited in Porritt 2014:79)

Coffield (2000) suggested that the ambiguities resulting from this range of different aims meant that the ideas of continuous learning in professions was 'shot through with conceptual vagueness', indicating difficulties in pinning down exact interpretations for the term. Such ambiguity in professional learning, he argued, had benefits and tensions in adapting to different interpretations, depending on contexts of its use. As example in lifelong learning, Coffield (2000) identified competing models that contrasted individualised learning with economic advantage, and compared the principles of opportunity in ongoing learning with marketisation. Tensions between these models, he suggested, highlighted issues of social control for employees and employers, where individual choice or opportunity might be set against employer expectations of learning in meeting market-led economic outcomes. Evetts (2010) agreed that a shift in perspectives of professionalism had contributed to a perception of managerial development as imposed control. Evetts (2010) compared 'occupational professionalism', based on autonomy, trust and collegiality with 'organisational professionalism', which introduced managerial direction and control over a practitioner's autonomous and collegiate practice.

Organisational professionalism is a discourse of control used increasingly by managers in work organisations. It incorporates rational legal forms of authority and hierarchical structures of responsibility and decision-making. It involves the increased standardisation of work procedures and practices and managerialist controls. It relies on externalised forms of regulation and accountability measures such as target setting and performance review.

(Evetts, 2010:129)

In professional development, Edwards and Nicoll (2006) identified ambiguity as a means whereby dissimilar interpretations were seen to be acceptable in particular contexts, where the selected interpretation for ongoing learning was accommodated and assimilated with existing socio-cultural beliefs. This allowed the professional context to approve of continuing learning as beneficial to workforce development, rather than to problematise or critique differences in terms, aims or approaches.

An ambiguous discourse of professional development can enable a range of interests to be mobilised as a supportive audience as different interests are translated into a common cause. Thus, for instance, it is difficult to be against the notion of professional development itself.

(Edwards & Nicoll, 2006:116)

In policy contexts, where the term 'continuing professional development' had been common to the four Scottish professions in the study, changing interpretations mean that different ways of describing learning and development were applied within each profession. Where social work had previously used the term 'continuing professional development', by 2008, the SSSC had introduced the 'Continuous Learning Framework', which informed a process of 'Continuing Learning and Re-registration' across Scottish social services (SSSC, 2008, 2014). In education, the terms 'professional update' and 'career-long learning' (GTCS, 2012b) replaced the formerly-used term of CPD (GTCS, 2002). Similarly, community education moved from CPD to the term 'continuous professional learning' (CLDSC, 2011). Nursing retained the term continuing professional development, replacing reference to 'Post-registration Education and Practice Standards' with the term 'revalidation' (NMC, 2015). In the policy documents, there was no specific explanation or justification for changes in terminologies, which may emerge as trends in discourse from one profession to another.

In this section, differing terminologies and interpretations of ideas of continuing professional learning and development were apparent. Ambiguities meant that professions culturally assimilated the concepts as beneficial, with insufficient critique of interpretations or practices (Edwards & Nicoll, 2006). In education, 'development' was perceived as representative of external control imposed through accountability measures, whereas 'learning' represented autonomy and potential for change (Timperley, 2011). While the application of learning to practice was considered to be a necessary factor of continuing learning (Grundy & Robinson, 2004; Porritt, 2014), the potential for practitioner learning to change policy or practice was seen as problematic (Campbell and Levin, 2012). Taking into account recent changes in terminology in literature and in Scottish professions, 'continuing professional learning' is used in this study as a generic term of reference. Here, continuing professional learning is taken to mean socially constructed processes of extending knowledge, expertise and ethical

judgement, enacted as transformative change for the benefit of practitioners and their field of practice. The selection of this term took account of a disenchantment with 'continuing professional development', commonly referred to as 'CPD', as increasingly used to represent professional accountability for registration, or the fulfilment of a required number of hours of learning. Where 'continuing professional development' or 'continuing professional education' were used in literature or empirical data, these terms have been retained in the context of their application.

In the next section, key characteristics of contemporary continuing learning are considered.

## 2.2 Characteristics of continuing professional learning

As a range of continuing learning processes, Kennedy (2005) identified nine models of CPD for Scottish teachers as 'training; award-bearing; deficit; cascade; standards; mentoring; community of practice, action research and transformative'. Kennedy grouped the nine models in three progressive stages of 'transmission, transition and transformation', where transmission represented information or technical skills; transition, processes of coaching, mentoring and communities of practice, and transformation, change brought about through action research. Updating the models in 2014, Kennedy revised the progressive processes to an active voice of 'transmissive' and 'transformative', rather than transmission or transformation. The 'transition' stage was renamed as 'malleable', in recognition that mentoring or communities of practice may foster autonomy and creativity, or equally, socialise participants in particular professional norms (Kennedy, 2014). Arguably, Kennedy's original concept of transition represents a stage of change, which might equally apply to socialisation, or empowerment of personal agency. These ideas of progressive stages of learning from the technical to the transformative could be compared to Aristotle's concepts of 'techne, episteme and phronēsis', and to Habermas's (1971) 'technical, practical and emancipatory' knowledge-constitutive interests. The significance of these ideas is that they represent an evolving process, from acquiring technical knowledge from others, to interpretation and transformation of practice with others. In Kennedy's progressive stages, there was an indication of both individual and interpersonal learning, which might be more concerned with individual acquisition in the transmission and transition stages, and as

participative in Kennedy's (2014) transformative stage. There was a transfer of responsibility in this process, from learner as receiver, to learner as interpreter, then as creator of knowledge.

With regard to socially constructed individual and interpersonal learning, Sfard (1998:6) argued that the development of learning could be described as two metaphors of acquisition or participation. As acquisition, Sfard argued that knowledge was received, assimilated and internalised (Piaget, 1978; Bateson, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978) by the individual as concept development, in a process of 'gaining possession over some commodity'. In a participation metaphor, learning was represented as the individual becoming a member of a community, adopting and contributing to norms in movement from a peripheral position to situated membership (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Sfard's concern was that overemphasis on one metaphor, as with the exclusivity of a single ideology, could serve to represent the interests of some parts of society while disadvantaging others. Sfard's proposal was that a combination of learning acquisition and participation contributed to critical learning (Habermas, 1971). In this respect, contradiction between the two approaches was a necessary feature of determining balance, towards a situation of complementarity as opposed to incompatibility of the approaches. These arguments suggest that continuing learning involves progressive stages of knowledge acquisition, interpretation and application, and that participation plays an essential role in these processes.

In the next section, characteristics of continuing professional learning that concern benefit to society are considered. In this interest, to ensure the quality and standards expected by society are met, a key feature of contemporary continuing learning is its contribution to professional accountability.

### 2.2.1 Professional accountability

Summarising research across a range of professions, Friedman and Phillips (2004:362) found common features of continuing professional development to include individual, professional and societal aims. Individual goals included lifelong learning, personal development, self-fulfilment and job security: 'a means for individual professionals to ensure a measure of control and security in the often-precarious modern workplace', where the



verification of standards, adaptability, competence and reliability were identified as professional aims. In terms of benefit to society, continuing learning as CPD was considered to present to the 'wary public' assurance that professional practice was reliable, maintaining standards of specialised knowledge and expertise on behalf of society. Although Friedman and Phillips (2004) drew out ideas of individual motivation for self-actualisation, the focus in their definition was of professional requirements of accountability against risk, and the need for demonstrated, evidenced learning in order to assure societal trust in reliable professionals. This approach complied with Evetts' (2010) concept of organisational professionalism, discussed in section 2.1, where standardisation of practice and externalised, legislative forms of regulation have influenced the concept of autonomy in 'being professional'. As a balance to performance measurement, a wider range of characteristics of continuing learning may be apparent in the workplace, and these are considered next.

### 2.2.2 Workplace participation

In the workplace, educational theorists have recognised that a significant amount of professional learning takes place informally, through Polanyi's (1967) idea of tacit learning; reflection and reflective dialogue (Schön, 1983, 1987); situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991); communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) or collaborative practice (Senge, 1990; Dixon, 2000). Of particular relevance to the four professions in the study, experiential learning theories (Kolb, 1984; Boud, Keogh and Walker, 1985) have promoted learning through and from work, using techniques of reflection on- and in-action (Schön, 1987) to analyse and evaluate practice. The concept of learning organisations (Senge, 1990; Senge et al., 1999) and Wenger's (1998) communities of practice have supported ideas that ongoing learning in the workplace is based on dialogue, collegial communication, trust, respect and collaboration. While the study does not aim to incorporate substantial discussion of these well-documented workplace learning approaches, their contribution to socially constructed interpersonal learning processes is nonetheless acknowledged. A primary consideration for the study is, however, a seeming shift from participation in collective learning processes in the workplace, either as informal interaction or through formal learning provided by employers, to an individualised responsibility to seek out and evidence learning

opportunities of relevance to workplace practice (for example, GTCS, 2012b). A second expanding area of work-related individualised professional learning, discussed in the next section, is that of accredited academic study.

### 2.2.3 Academic accreditation

Recent growth in professionalisation across a range of mainly public service UK occupations including teaching, community education, social work and nursing has involved the introduction of degree-level academic qualifications, endorsed and validated by professional bodies. A consequence of qualifying degrees as the academic standard required to enter professions has been an increasing requirement for Master's degrees as necessary for career progression. The latter trend is apparent in education, in for example Donaldson's (2011) proposal that Scottish teaching should move towards becoming a Master's profession. In higher education, a doctoral degree is now a preferred requirement for teaching professional programmes in Scottish universities.

Explaining why this increase in required credentials for public professions has come about, Eraut (1994) indicated that in post-war UK, there had been a move away from specialised professional training to university education. In Scotland, where specialist higher education colleges of education or nursing previously provided validated training for professions, government funding restrictions led to mergers of these colleges with universities from the 1990s onwards. A consequence of these trends has been a tension between universities and professions in control over the knowledge base and skills development processes required to meet the demands of both professional work and academic achievement.

Eraut (1994:7) argued that universities held an autonomous position in the provision of learning, asserting that 'universities have a recognised independent role in the creation and validation of learning'. The degree as the professions' token of credible status in society was then provided externally by academic organisations, which in Eraut's view were not only separate to, but also more powerful than the professions. Implications of this trend for continuing learning were that tensions between each context in determining the knowledge and skills base most suited to twenty-first century professions and professionals are still apparent. In terms of ongoing learning, Eraut (1994) had argued, transfer of training

responsibilities of emerging professions to universities had effects of increasing student numbers in the university sector, and reducing the burden of training costs for professions, in some cases passing the cost of learning to individuals. In the latter argument, passing responsibility for ongoing professional learning to individual practitioners could represent the least expensive, rather than best quality, option for professional development. For universities, increased student numbers as post-qualifying learners further enhanced their market position, with a *quid pro quo* for professions of a more educated, more qualified workforce. Where this change in responsibility for training and learning begins to unravel is in effects of credentialism and individualism, ideas which are discussed further in Chapter 3.

In the USA, Cervero (2000) had noted a similar trend for continuing professional education as university provision of post-qualifying accredited learning, particularly through the medium of work-based learning. In this approach, academic study that involved applied research had increased through ideas of action research and collaborative learning (Lewin, 1946; Revans, 1983; Reason & Bradbury, 2006). Accepting increased interest in collaboration between the workplace and academy in devising and delivering continuing learning, Cervero (2000) suggested that this approach was espoused rather than realised, and despite significant expansion of interest in ongoing professional learning, there were insufficient means of engaging with continuing learning in professional practice contexts. Following Cervero's ideas, the effectiveness of academic study as workforce development would depend on increased collaboration between employers, professions and universities in the development, resourcing and provision of continuing learning.

This section has indicated that changes in initial training from specialist colleges to universities has contributed to a move from professional to individual responsibilities for continuing learning. In the next section, the growth of new technologies as a medium for ongoing learning is considered.

#### 2.2.4 Learning mediation through new technologies

The expansion of new technologies has increased potential for online workplace and academic continuing learning. The ease of use, accessibility and cost-effectiveness of electronic materials and media for teaching and learning mean that eLearning is increasingly

a preferred option for continuing learning. In professions, the expansion of online frameworks for performance measurement, and requirements of ePortfolios to evidence practice, means that monitoring and evaluating practice could be considered as an electronic panopticon (Bentham, 1798) where inspection of practice might be carried out from an external perspective, without interactive engagement with the practitioner. Where Bentham's rationale for the device was cutting costs in eighteenth century prison supervision, a panopticon approach similarly reduces costs for employers of auditing workforce learning and quality assurance by systemising professional appraisal, and secondly, by passing responsibility for self-evaluation to individual employees.

Accepting the benefits of technological advancement, tensions may also occur for a technical communication approach that tends towards individualisation. From advantages of ease of individual access to computers, tablets, smartphones and the Internet, and speed of communication of ideas and materials through electronic media, there are disadvantages too, of human work as increasingly individual and computer dependant. Where professionals are required to carry out tasks of reading, sorting and responding to mail on a daily basis, of typing and proofing documents, producing electronic records of work, or engaging in online communities, this seems to add more layers of work, rather than make work more manageable. For professional practice, a consequence of technological individualisation may be a reduction in tacit and ethical learning through the presence of face-to-face encounters, involving informal and formal dialogue as critical reflection and collaborative problem-solving (Dreyfus, 2001; Senge et al., 2005). It is however recognised that digital processes of learning mediation are expanding exponentially, and that online technologies have both opportunities and challenges for professional learning. While this is not a core aspect of the research, it is nonetheless instrumental to changing processes of communication, learning and work in professions.

This section has reviewed characteristics grouped as professional accountability, workplace participation and academic accreditation. Increased individualised learning, stemming from professional accountability and a move from professional training to academic study was noted, where responsibilities and costs for learning were passed from employer to employees. In the next section, motivations for continuing learning are considered.

## 2.3 Motivations for continuing professional learning

In response to the research question about motivation for continuing professional learning, ideas about motivation for learning are discussed in this section. These are based on Maslow's (1943, 1954) motivational needs and ideas of extrinsic, intrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and altruistic (Pellegrino & Thomasma, 1993) motivations. In his seminal model, Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs comprised five stages of human growth. The first level represented physiological needs; the second, safety; third, connectedness with others, and fourth, self-esteem. The latter four stages, Maslow considered as deficiency needs, which had to be met to enable the fifth intrinsic stage of self-actualisation, of growth and fulfilment as a 'good human being', to take place.

Growth is in itself a rewarding and exciting process...fulfilling of yearnings and ambitions like that of being a good doctor, the acquisition of admired skills, like playing the violin or being a good carpenter; the steady increase of understanding about people or about the universe, or about oneself: the development of creativeness in whatever field or, most important, simply the ambition to be a good human being.

(Maslow, cited in McLelland & Steele, 1973: 241-243)

In contrast to intrinsic motivation for growth, Maslow proposed that motivations that responded to lower-level deficiency needs were extrinsically driven, and that in responding to external motives, the learner could develop a lack of self-governance. This suggested that where motivation for say, connection or self-esteem, was driven by conformity and compliance, intrinsic self-determination could become replaced by a need for external governance. In an interpretation of Maslow's work (1943, 1954), Koltko-Rivera (2006) explained that Maslow had proposed a further stage of altruism or 'self-transcendence' in which the subject moved from self-actualisation to a stage 'above or beyond selfhood'. Koltko-Rivera argued that at the level of self-actualisation the individual's motivation is towards realising their own potential, whereas at the level of self-transcendence, the individual's own needs are put aside in the interests of others or of 'greater good'. This stage

could be determined as altruistic motivation. The extension to Maslow's ascending hierarchy, with the additional factor and Koltko-Rivera's explanations, is represented in Table 2.

<b>Maslow (1943, 1954)</b>	<b>Koltko-Rivera's explanation of Maslow's hierarchy (2006:303)</b>	<b>Motivation</b>
Self-transcendence	Interests of others, beyond self-hood	<b>Altruistic</b>
Self-actualisation	Fulfilment of personal potential	<b>Intrinsic</b>
Esteem	Recognition or achievement	<b>Extrinsic</b>
Belonging	Affiliation with a group	
Safety	Security through order or law	
Physiological	Basic needs of living	

Table 2 Motivations (adapted from Maslow, 1943, 1954; Koltko-Rivera, 2006)

Stemming from Maslow's ideas of deficiency or growth, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are terms used to explain concepts that drive human behaviour. Extrinsic motivation involves externally determined goals or rewards, whereas intrinsic motivation, for Ryan & Deci (2000), means that the activity is inherently enjoyable in and of itself. In terms of learning, these authors argued that extrinsic motivating factors that were concerned with task performance, including rewards, deadlines, directives, threats or competition would routinely undermine intrinsic motivation, as these factors were perceived as controlling the learner. Conversely, factors of intrinsic motivation, such as choice, autonomy, and self-direction in learning would enhance positive experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2000:56). In continuing professional learning, these ideas have significance in terms of self-motivation for ongoing learning, vis-a-vis Cervero's (2000) idea of 'who controls the learning and for what purposes'. Where individuals make choices to undertake professional learning for intrinsic purposes, outcomes of discovery, expansion, growth and self-actualisation are achieved, according to Maslow's (1943) construct. If, on the other hand, motivation for professional learning is driven by extrinsic factors, achievements for the learner, their workplace and profession may be different to outcomes of growth or expansion. In the research, factors of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for continuing professional learning may offer insight into ways in which professional learning is understood by practitioners, professions and providers. Moreover, Koltko-Rivera's (2006) sixth factor of altruistic motivation, in relation to acting in the interests of others in society, is of significance to ethical aspects of professionalism and professional learning in the study.

Altruism, a term introduced by Compté (1848) is concerned with taking the interests of others into account, in relation to knowledge, power and privilege (Pellegrino & Thomasma, 1993). The latter authors, writing about medical ethics, suggested that the key term for ethics of the professions is 'altruistic beneficence', where not only are the interests of others taken into account but this is carried out in a manner which gives preference to others and involves a certain reduction of self-interest. In relation to professions, these authors considered that the extent to which a profession is virtuous was dependent on the extent to which altruistic beneficence is exercised, above individual self-interest.

A virtuous professional then is one who can be expected with reasonable certainty to exhibit as one characteristic of character altruistic beneficence, construed as effacement of self-interest.

(Pellegrino & Thomasma, 1993:147)

The authors argued that ethical behaviour in the professions might stem from factors of 'unresolved tensions' between concepts of self-interest and professional ethics. Conceptual challenges to professional ethics might include a shift in political and economic values, and a move from the professional as autonomous moral agent to a focus on dilemma resolution within a framework of risk aversion (ibid). These tensions raise questions about the extent to which extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic motivations discussed in this section may create or cross boundaries in relation to the benefits of learning for individuals, workplaces, professions and societies. Does continuing professional learning in some contexts focus on extrinsic factors of control or reward; or on intrinsic factors of self-directed development? In what ways, if any, does continuing professional learning reflect goals of altruistic beneficence in its motivations, outcomes or impacts? In connection with the tensions described by Pellegrino & Thomasma (1993), to what extent do their factors of political and economic values, or interpretations of ethics, moral agency or of self-interest, impact on trends in characteristics and outcomes of professional learning?

This concludes Chapter 2, which has considered characteristics, influences and motivations of ongoing learning in professions. The literature review for the study continues in Chapter 3, which concerns historical trends in ideas about professions and professionalism.

## Chapter 3 Professions and professionalism

This chapter responds to the research aims of determining the purposes and processes of continuing professional learning and addresses the research question, ‘what historical and contemporary trends contribute to understandings of the concepts of professions, professionalism and professional learning?’ The chapter is divided into five sections. Section 3.1 begins with an overview of definitions, and ways of describing occupations as professions, and practitioners as professionals. Section 3.2 examines historical trends in the development of occupations as professions in the UK and Europe, which have contributed to processes of defining professions by a series of distinguishing traits. In section 3.3, interpretations of professionalism as ideological or normative constructs are considered. From an ideological perspective, influences on the professionalisation of occupations through increased trends of managerialism, marketisation and standardisation are discussed. Section 3.4 examines ways in which performative trends in standardisation and performance measurement have influenced professional learning. The chapter concludes in section 3.5, which considers tensions of credentialism, and benefits of graduate attributes, that stem from increasing levels of required academic qualifications within professions.

### 3.1 Interpretations of ‘profession’ and ‘professional’.

In the study, an initial interest in professional learning and development led to two areas of consideration. First, what is meant by ideas about being ‘professional’ and second, what learning approaches might be specific to developing as ‘a professional’? The term ‘professional’ has been subject to different grammatical and cultural definitions that contribute to contested interpretations. In grammatical terms, ‘professional’ can be a noun or adjective: ‘a professional’ as a noun tends to mean a person working in a specialist occupation, whereas ‘professional’ as an adjective could be used to describe proficiency in any occupation or activity. In cultural terms, being ‘professional’ as opposed to ‘amateur’ (from French, a ‘lover of’) can describe someone in paid employment as opposed to a leisure participant (Paechter, 1996), for example, a professional footballer. Keen (2007) argued that a new dimension of global communication and publication has diminished socially



constructed distinctions between professionals and amateurs, through expansion of non-specialist production of creative media including music, film and literature. Edwards (2010) questioned negative connotations of the term 'amateur' as an antonym to 'professional', drawing comparison to voluntary work carried out by people who may have significant experience in particular role, although unqualified or unpaid. For volunteers, an altruistic motivation to contribute to societal benefit as 'morally committed citizens' (Edwards, 2010:8) has a similar intention to the moral responsibility of professions in carrying out an altruistic role on behalf of society. Accepting closer relationships between these terms, everyday usage of the term 'professional' has implications of ethical behaviour, also apparent in the negative sense of being 'unprofessional', which describes unethical behaviour or inefficient work (Elliot, 1972).

In contemporary challenges, being a professional in an 'age of supercomplexity' is fraught with difficulties, according to Barnett (2000:190). A particular concern is that ethical standards in an increasing range of professions have been called into question (O'Neill, 2002). Hargreaves (2006:687) argued that the post-modern challenges of economic globalisation and technological revolution in information communication are destabilising the work of professionals, resulting in 'deprofessionalisation', as a reduction in autonomous and responsible judgement on the part of practitioners about how best the needs of services provided by professions can be met. Johnson (2001) posed questions for teaching as professional practice in the twenty-first century that has seemingly lost the potential for enjoyment of work, to contribute to new ideas and practices, and disconcertingly, for the ownership and expression of professional integrity. 'What happened?' the author entreated. 'What happened to my creativity? What happened to my professional integrity? What happened to the fun in teaching and learning?' (Johnson, in *The Guardian*, 9 Jan 2001, cited in Ball, 2013:59). These questions summarise tensions between control and compliance in professional work, suggesting a sense of disenfranchisement and frustration in restriction of a need to explore, interpret and create knowledge and to exercise autonomous integrity, both individually and collectively, in making ethical decisions.

These initial ideas about what is meant by the key terms of professions and being professional are developed further in this chapter, which next examines the historical origins and contexts of professions, in order to determine what influences have contributed to present day structures and interpretations.

### 3.2 A historical overview of professions

This section gives an overview of the medieval historical origins of European and UK professions, followed by discussion of the key ideas of a range of authors who have influenced ideas about professions and professionalism from the 1800s to the present day. Classic professions of medicine, law and divinity date back to the Middle Ages in the UK and Europe when the church held supremacy; controlling knowledge, crown and state (Elliot, 1972). In 1711, Addison cited the three great professions as 'divinity, law and physic', noting that graduates were mainly the sons of nobility and landed gentry (Cunningham, 2008). In an account of the historical rise of professions, Crook (2008) argued that the classic or 'learned' professions still hold supremacy in present day society. The term 'professional', stemming from the Latin verb *profitieri*, meaning 'to profess', or declare publicly, was first used in the context of postulants joining religious orders.

With the rise of universities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, knowledge and learning became secularised, and opposing views of how society was structured began to emerge. In 1605, Francis Bacon noted professional specialisms in universities across Europe. 'Amongst so many great foundations of colleges in Europe, I find it strange that they are all dedicated to professions, and none left free to Arts and Sciences at large' (cited in Houle, 1980:21). Medicine, law and theology were the principle areas of learning in three of the oldest universities in Europe. The University of Bologna, founded in 1088, focused on the study of law; from the twelfth century, the University of Paris specialised in theology, and from the thirteenth century, the University of Montpellier was at the forefront in the study of medicine (Crook, 2008).

Whereas medieval universities had originally prepared students for the church, in sixteenth century England, it was no longer necessary for students to take religious orders. Instead,

graduates became members of professional associations, a process that involved 'professing' secular vows to obey procedures and ethical codes of practice. According to Montague (1963), by the 1700s, the classic professions had attained independence and other occupations were beginning to acquire professional status, creating separations between skill-based occupations, commerce, and occupations that relied on university levels of study. Crook (2008) argued that the relationships between the learned professions, the church and the universities created a divide between 'elite professions, traders and artisans'. The separation of seventeenth century occupations and professions was thus influenced by three shifts in power; the separation of universities from the church, which created a division between secular moralities and religious obligations; widening access to study classic professions in universities across Europe, and the processes of monopolisation of commerce and skilled occupations by merchants and trade guilds.

### 3.2.1 Medieval trade guilds

In medieval Europe, trade guilds were formed for a range of practical skills-based occupations, and acted as associations to maintain standards and control recruitment, training and production. For Elliot (1972), this had implications in control of supply and demand, in that the professional expertise and specialised knowledge of the trades represented autonomous organisation of occupations in response to social need. Larson (1977) argued that the learning approaches for guilds differed from those of the classic professions, in that members of trade guilds learned practical skills through apprenticeships, whereas 'gentlemen professionals' undertook studies at universities. On graduation, however, professions required a period of probation as an equivalent of apprenticeship, which suggested that the underpinning frameworks of trades and classic professions were more alike than Larson had suggested. The main difference between trades and professions, from an early stage in history, seems to have been a theoretical knowledge base achieved through attendance at university.

From an ethical perspective, a key similarity between professions and guilds was the purpose of trade guilds to uphold the 'common good' of society, noted also by Flexner (1915) as a primary trait of an occupation designated as profession. In the apprenticeship to

seventeenth century Scottish trades, Duffus (2000) explained that craftsmen were required to 'profess' an oath of loyalty to God, the crown, state and profession. A central aspect was to pledge charitable support to other members and to 'fortifie the common weil', as common wealth, or common good, as opposed to financial wealth. According to Duffus, membership of a craft guild involved stages of apprenticeship to a master over a period of seven to nine years - a timescale that relates to Ericsson, Prietula & Cokely's (2007) suggestion that expertise in any context requires 10,000 hours of supported practice. The craft apprentice progressed to 'journeyman', stemming from the French 'journée' or day, representing a daily wage, a term still used today to describe an experienced tradesman. On presentation of his 'essay' or 'masterpiece', the journeyman was entitled to establish a master's workshop and employ apprentices. Exclusivity of membership of a guild, according to Duffus, was intended to maintain standards, with an added function of fixing prices and excluding workers from outside the burgh. These ideas explain that while medieval 'profession' as a process acknowledged the power of the state, crown and church, the occupational association exercised economic autonomy and maintained responsibility for training, assessment, production and quality control, albeit through closed shops and market monopolisation. In this situation, apprentices gained expertise in a staged progression through processes of work-based instruction, support and assessment, contexted in experiential practice within an occupational community of practice. This learning approach is apparent in contemporary situated professional learning contexts analysed in the work of Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998 and Sennet, 2008; 2012.

Divisions in society apparent between medieval occupations underpinned by skilled expertise, commercial profitability or academic learning, with supremacy of academic professions (Crook, 2008) remain unchanged in the twenty-first century. Separations between the control of external professional rules and the development of situated, practice-based ethical norms, apparent in the guild workshop, still form the core of ethical practice in contemporary professions. From this early division between academy and work as contexts for learning, the changing nature of work and diminishing power of religion brought significant societal change. Rather than compliance with the structured guidance of the church, the eighteenth-century Enlightenment introduced possibilities of wider social

construction of morality. Where this represented a move from religious convictions to scientific and positivistic views of reality, the role of human interaction in creating moral perspectives remained imperative. As an example of these changing beliefs, Adam Smith's eighteenth century ideas of rules and virtues are discussed next, followed by the significance of his concepts of the division of labour and of moral sympathy to professions and professional practice.

### 3.2.2 Adam Smith: productivity and reciprocity

The idea of rules and virtues as two separate aspects of morality was theorised in Adam Smith's (1759) *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, where morality was first expressed in terms of societal laws or justice, and second as developmental guidelines for practice devised by participants in relation to specific contexts. This combination of top-down and ground-up guidance for practice suggests a need for both external professional codes of ethics and for internal normative development in professions. Two further aspects of Smith's ideas have had a bearing on contemporary learning for professionals: the division of labour (1776) and a less-often quoted idea of 'mutual sympathy', which might be described as a non-material concern for reciprocity. In eighteenth century Scotland, Adam Smith's (1776) treatise *The Wealth of Nations* proposed a concept of the growth of productivity through division of labour and this played a significant part in changing ideas about how work was organised in societies. Rather than training apprentices in all aspects of an occupation, Smith proposed that focus on one aspect of production (in his example, pin making) would allow greater productivity, a concept which became central to the systemised manufacturing of the industrial revolution. Although Smith's treatise did not explicitly include explanation of ways in which workers would be trained or assessed, he was concerned with the moral implications of work that disengaged practitioners from democratic processes of making decisions or taking responsibilities. In arguing the case for publicly funded liberal education, Smith sought to ensure that repetitive tasks of productive labour did not reduce the capabilities of workers to engage in thought, debate or judgement. An apparent dichotomy in Smith's ideas were the seemingly opposing ideas of individual gain and collaborative exchange, which he termed 'mutual sympathy'. Smith explained that individuals aimed to

fulfil their own material gain, but that the selection of contexts to fulfil this gain, for example contribution to a domestic market, would lead to societal benefit.

Every individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage, not that of society that he has in view. But the study of his own advantage naturally or rather necessarily leads him to prefer that employment which is most advantageous to society.

(Smith, 1776: IV.2.4)

Smith explained that despite acting in self-interest, an involvement in domestic trade and commerce would enable individual contributions to those societies. Balancing this idea with his concept of mutual sympathy in *A Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Smith offered an explanation of both individual interest and commitment to the other as necessary factors in a balanced and prosperous society. Vernon Smith (1998) argued that both *The Wealth of Nations* and *A Theory of Moral Sentiments* concurred on one 'behavioural axiom', that of trading. He proposed that Adam Smith's axiom of trade: 'the propensity to truck, barter and exchange one thing for another', occurred not only where the objects of trade were material goods, but also in non-material benefits of help, assistance, trust or support, as means of relational empathy between people. Smith (1998) summed up this explanation of reciprocity as a means of understanding the dichotomy in Adam Smith's work of a focus on self-interest, and at the same time, interest in the other:

Thus, Adam Smith's single axiom, broadly interpreted ... is sufficient to characterise a major proportion of human social and cultural enterprise. It explains why human nature appears to be simultaneously self-regarding and other-regarding.

(Smith, 1998:3)

As an example of the application of concern for others in an eighteenth century professional context, the 'golden rules' for professional conduct of the Society of Advocates in Aberdeen in 1764 cited 'honour; integrity; charitable actions; mercy; compassion and relief to the oppressed and distressed; the study and practice of humanity, justice and equity' (Henderson, 1912: x). These rules, or 'virtues' in Smith's interpretation, give an indication of

traditions of altruism and concern with common good associated with professional practice from both the trades' guilds and classic professions in traditions of Scottish society from at least the eighteenth century onwards. As a key characteristic of oaths or 'professions' taken by members of trades and guilds in medieval Scotland, to codes of practice in eighteenth century advocates, charitable support and concern for justice, inclusion and striving for 'the common-weil' seemed central to historical perspectives of professions in Scotland.

### 3.2.3 Influences of the industrial revolution

In a significant socio-economic influence on ways in which work, professions and societies were organised in the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution of the 1800s led to a replacement of feudal societies by manufacturing middle classes. In 1848, Marx and Engels (cited in Lauder et al., 2006) argued that the manufacturing class linked with the aristocracy created a 'bourgeois' upper class which dominated the 'proletariat' working class, reinforcing class division in societies. Free market principles increased capitalist ideals of individual profit, replacing norms of independent collective organisation of work in societies, reducing collaborative membership guilds and increasing competitive individual entrepreneurship. This meant that the enhanced societal status of commercial occupations stemmed from profit rather than from a service to society. The professions maintained a public service interest, making a distinction between commercial enterprise and altruistic expertise, albeit more in the private than public sector. A moral responsibility to society in early twentieth century professions was influenced by Weber's (1905, 2011) perspective of the 'vocation' or calling by God to do good work, based on a Protestant work ethic derived from the Reformation, where Christian values, both Protestant and Catholic, underpinned the fabric of European societies (Crook, 2008).

From the industrial revolution onwards, according to Crook (2008), the combination of urbanisation and increase in technological occupations contributed to the creation a new professional middle class, and with this, a rise in government intervention in professional organisation. Eraut (1994) agreed that the role of the professions as a conduit between societal needs and state control emerged in the nineteenth century as a response to attempts on the part of the state to control occupations, rebutted by professions:

if state control is unacceptable, as it was when the ideology of professionalism first emerged in nineteenth-century Britain and America, then control has to be vested in the experts themselves.

(Eraut, 1994:2)

This rebuttal reinforced the idea of professions as expert public services, to some extent dependent on state support, yet not under the direct control of governments and thus able to maintain an autonomy of practice. Schön (1983) argued that the science-based technologic expertise that arose out of the industrial revolution influenced the way that professions developed within society. He stressed the significance of Comte's 1848 ideas of positivism that declared empirical science as the basis of all knowledge, with control over not only scientific knowledge, but also political and moral interests. In selecting certain occupations as professions, a positivist trend among early twentieth century authors of classifying specific traits of professions is discussed next.

#### 3.2.4 Professional traits

For authors writing mainly in a sociological context in the USA, UK and Europe from the 1970s to the present day (for example Eraut, 1994; Hoyle & John, 1995; Carr, 2000), professions involve specialist knowledge and expertise, adherence to an ethical code, responsibility and public service. Memberships of professional associations were restricted to those who meet specified criteria, in some cases representing a monopoly or 'closed shop'. Authority in the professional field of practice, autonomy in decision-making, social status and enhanced remuneration were recognised responsibilities and outcomes of professional standing. Earlier twentieth century authors tended towards a functionalist approach in attempts to consider common features of professions, and Flexner's (1915:904) six characteristics of professions routinely formed a starting point for identifying specific criteria that marked differences between professions and other occupations. Professional activity, Flexner explained, incorporated 'intellectual action with personal responsibility, (was) based on knowledge and involved practical techniques' which could be taught. A profession, he argued, was 'organised by its members', who worked towards the 'good of society'.



Millerson (1964) offered a similar list of characteristics that included 'the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge; education and training in those skills certified by examination; a code of professional conduct oriented towards the 'public good' and a powerful professional organisation' (cited in Cunningham, 2008:31). Starr (1982:10) identified a profession as 'an occupation that regulates itself through systematic required training and collegial discipline, that has a base in technical specialised knowledge and that has a service rather than profit orientation enshrined in its code of ethics'.

According to Hoyle and John (1995:16), the term 'profession' could be applied to occupations that had consensus about knowledge, autonomy and responsibility, which the authors denoted as distinguishing characteristics. For Sullivan (1995:2), three features characterised professions. These were 'specialised training in a field of codified knowledge, usually acquired by formal education and apprenticeship; public recognition of a certain autonomy on the part of the community of practitioners to regulate their own standards of practice, and a commitment to provide services to the public which goes beyond the economic welfare of the practitioners'. These authors agreed that financial gain was not the primary defining factor of a profession; rather, a sense of altruism and public service, underpinned by specialist knowledge, skills and ethical morality fostered a relationship of trust between the client and practitioner.

From an ethical perspective, Carr (2000) summarised the role of professions in terms of the characteristics of public service, which comprised theoretical as well as practical experience, a distinctive ethical dimension expressed through a code of practice, organisation and regulation, and the expression of autonomy, described as 'independence of judgement for effective practice' (Carr, 2000:23). Carr's interpretation endorsed a normative role for professions as a service to society, in return for which, societal trust in autonomy of professional judgement was granted.

From a selection of these interpretations, a comparison of professional traits across six 20<sup>th</sup> Century decades is given in Table 3.

<b>Author, date</b>	<b>Knowledge (Cognition)</b>	<b>Expertise (Skills)</b>	<b>Autonomy (Responsibility)</b>	<b>Association (Membership)</b>	<b>Altruism (Ethical praxis)</b>
Flexner (1915)	Intellectual action	Practical techniques which can be taught	Personal responsibility; membership	Organised by its members	Altruistic; for good of society
Leiberman (1956)	Intellectual techniques	Extended specialist training over a long period	Practitioner and group responsibility for judgements	Unique and essential social service	Emphasis on service, not economic gain
Millerson (1964)	Education based on theoretical knowledge	Training in skills, certified through Examination	Code of professional conduct	Powerful professional organisation	Code of professional conduct towards 'public good'
Starr (1982)	Technical specialised knowledge	Systematic required training	Occupation that regulates itself	Collegial discipline	Service rather than profit; code of ethics
Sullivan (1995)	Formal education in field of codified knowledge	Specialised training, apprenticeship codified knowledge	Autonomy of community of practitioners to regulate own standards	Autonomy of community of practitioners	Commitment of public services, beyond economic welfare of practitioners
Carr (2000)	Theoretical expertise	Practical expertise	Autonomy, independent judgement	Organisation, regulation, recruitment and discipline	Important public service; distinct ethical dimension /code

**Table 3 Comparison of functional characteristics of professions**

In Table 3, factors are described in relation to five key characteristics of professions as knowledge, expertise, autonomy, association and altruism. The subheadings of cognition, skills, responsibility, membership and ethical praxis represent the means whereby the key characteristics are acquired or developed. Over a period of a hundred years, professions have been defined as involving formal education in specialist knowledge, an ethical code towards an altruistic consideration of public good; expert training in practical skills over extended periods of time; individual and collective autonomy and responsibility for judgements; association of members, and altruistic concern for societal good.

Where the term autonomy has been interpreted by authors as either individual (Carr, 2000) or collegiate (Sullivan, 1995), autonomy is here taken to mean both individual and collective responsibility for practice based on deliberative ethical judgement (Leiberman, 1956). The object of autonomy is represented in the table by a heading of 'altruism', as ethical praxis. Altruism is taken to mean practice that serves the public good (Flexner, 1915; Millerson, 1964) and that prioritises service over economic gain (Leiberman, 1956; Starr, 1982). In this

way, the two concepts of autonomy and altruism are interconnected as decision-making for public good.

In a revisionist approach to professional traits, Wilensky (1964) explored theories of inequality and exclusion in US occupations, which he argued were brought about by social closure of professions. Wilensky's (1964) *The Professionalisation of Everyone?* questioned if every occupation could become a profession. He proposed altruism, association and autonomy as aspects of distinction for specialist professional occupations. For Wilensky, control, validation and self-regulation meant that professions held a powerful role in society that was not readily to be relinquished. In 1960s USA, Etzioni argued contentiously that teachers, nurses and social workers should be excluded from 'professional' status, and instead classified as 'semi-professions'. Etzioni's rationale for this stemmed from the distinctions he offered, which in his view included a lower knowledge base, less autonomy and more supervisory control.

Their training is shorter, their status less legitimised, their right to privileged communication less established, there is less of a specialised body of knowledge, and they have less autonomy from supervision or societal control than 'the' professions.

(Etzioni, 1969: x)

In this assertion, Etzioni did not define precisely what he meant by 'the' professions, although he later referred to classical and to new, aspiring professions as 'technical scientific or managerial' in response to an industrialising society. A further argument in Etzioni's concept of semi-professions was that nursing, teaching and social work mainly involved women, whom he claimed could not possibly be professionals, as this state was reserved for men. From this perspective, issues of privilege and gender bias were evident in Etzioni's work, reflecting socio-cultural prejudices surrounding professions in 1960s USA.

Meanwhile in post-war UK, professions followed seemingly more egalitarian trends. A social democratic emphasis in British politics from 1945 to 1979 led to the establishment and growth of the welfare state, with resultant increase in public sector professional occupations mainly in health, education and social welfare. As debates around the purposes and

principles of attaining professional status increased, authors began to assert that as a contested term determined by socio-economic and cultural contexts, it was no longer considered productive to examine the trait factors of 'a profession'. Instead, in the second part of the twentieth century, authors began to explore professionalism as an ideology, or belief system of control. This forms the basis of discussion in the next section.

### 3.3 Professionalism and professionalisation

In this section, ideas of professionalism and professionalisation are discussed.

Professionalism is considered both as an ideology, where 'a dominant group secure some form of advantage over a subordinate group' (Ransome, 2010: 442) and as a normative system in society (Evetts, 2003). Neoliberal influences of managerialism and marketisation are then examined, followed by a discussion of processes of professionalisation.

#### 3.3.1 Professionalism: ideology and value systems

Evetts (2003) suggested formats for professions as ideological, and as such, representative of operational, organisational and normative systems. Arguing that professions have become more characteristic of an ideology than of traits, the author considered that professionalism as a sociological construct, whereby occupations act on behalf of society and in doing so, adopt self-regulatory procedures of occupational control, with the ability to operate a closed market. In return, professions provide services in areas of societal complexity, working to an ethical code of practice to which they are publicly accountable. Evetts summarised professions as operational in relation to the knowledge base gained through training, qualification and experience: 'essentially the knowledge based categories of occupations which usually follow a period of tertiary education and vocational training and experience' (Evetts, 2003:397). Organisational processes of professions, set in place on behalf of society to deal with complexity and risk, were described by Evetts as 'the structural, occupational and institutional arrangements for dealing with work associated with the uncertainties of modern lives in risk societies' (ibid). Evetts suggested that occupational descriptions of professions could be pragmatic, and that ideological interpretations had shifted in interest from professions to professionalism. Whereas professions were influenced by the dominant

socio-political ideologies at any given time, Evetts asserted, they also contributed to political, cultural and social changes, and in this way, were representative of a normative value system in societies.

Evetts (2003) explained an appeal of professions as responding to a seeming autonomy in terms of expertise and organisation of work practices, yet complying with behaviours that followed trends of accountability and normalisation in determining cultural identities of work. Where Evetts' interpretation recognised a normative value system as an intention of professionalism, she warned that requirements for accountability and compliance presented challenges to actual autonomy of practice. Crook (2008) agreed that a move from adopting a stance of societal trust to recognition of expertise in professionalism did not take sufficient account of tensions between idealised and actual perspectives of autonomy in professional practice. Crook argued that there were

tensions between the ideal image of the modern professional (client-focused, independent, respectable, well rewarded, influential) and what is sometimes the reality (overwhelmed by paperwork, in peril of litigation, overworked, stressed).  
(Crook, 2008:24)

The idea of being professional has been problematised in these descriptions as referring to two different, if interconnected, perceptions of professions: one which described the ways in which professions designate, operationalise and act as symbolic identifiers of occupational and organisational identity in societies, as in 'being 'a' professional'. Second, 'being professional' offers a normative means of describing ethical behaviour in relation to occupation specific, general and legal codes of practice in a given context. Following Crook's (2008) argument, exercise of the latter may be idealised rather than operational.

In a later analysis, drawing from Bronfenbrenner's (1994) construct, Evetts (2011) suggested that professions as ideological and normative systems might operate on micro, meso or macro levels, representing individuals or groups at the micro level, organisations at macro level and societies or markets at meso level. Evetts explained that an ideological perspective outlined ways in which professionalism became a means of social control at personal, workplace and societal levels. At societal level, the appeal of professionalism was one of

increased political control over professions; within professions, control over organisations and individual practitioners, and in organisations, managerial control over practitioners was applied at both individual and collective levels. This 'appeal of professionalism' for Evetts had an impact on the exercise of professional values and work practices.

The appeal to professionalism most often includes the substitution of organisational for professional values; bureaucratic, hierarchical and managerial controls rather than collegial relations; budgetary restrictions and rationalisations; performance targets, accountability and increased political control. In this sense, then, it can be argued that the appeal to professionalism is an 'effective' mechanism of social control at micro, meso and macro levels.

(Evetts, 2003:406-407)

As a normative value system, Evetts argued that professionalism operated mainly at organisational and societal levels. This suggestion was based on Durkheim's (1958, 1992) concept of the profession as a 'moral community' and Tawney's (1921) idea that professionalism tamed 'rampant individualism to the needs of the community' (cited in Evetts, 2011:399). Professionalism, she suggested, was considered as a positive influence of stability and freedom in response to industrialisation or bureaucracy (Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1933) and as altruistic service to society, maintaining democratic responsibilities (Marshall, 1950). Maintaining confidentiality and trust in carrying out a responsible and efficient job were central to the moral responsibility of professionals, which Evetts (2011) argued contribute to a pact of higher status in return for service to society. This moral contract between UK professions and society had diminished in the 1970s and 1980s, according to Evetts, in a backlash against professions as elitist and exclusive. The latter account of professionalism as a restricted normative value system brought into question ways in which professional autonomy could address and respond to complex ethical issues of the specific professional practice and at the same time, respond to tightening and often overly bureaucratic accountability systems. These might include risk assessment of activities, health and safety regulations, or restricted time constraints for completion of professional work.

In a context of medicine, Monrouxe, Rees and Hu (2011:587) agreed that professionalism is subject to progressively complex discourses, which they described as 'individual, collective, interpersonal and complexity'. The authors proposed that individual professionalism related to personal attitudes, values or behaviours that are not context specific, whereas collective professionalism applied to particular attributes of the profession as signifiers of accountability to the professional association. Monrouxe et al. made a distinction between collective and interpersonal discourses, explaining that the latter related to social professional interaction and communication between individuals, representing 'constructs that emerge through shared participation in activities'. These ideas link to Wenger's (1998) communities of practice, and to Engeström's (1987, 2009) cultural-historical activity theories, discussed in Chapter 4. Monrouxe et al. (2011) suggested that the project of professionalism was one of continuing change: 'principles and attributes of professionalism are in constant conflict, negotiated and renegotiated across different situational contexts'. This perspective has developed to an extent where these authors suggested that influences could no longer be seen as individual or organisational, but as interrelated and synergistic. In this way, the authors argued, 'professionalism is not solely the property of individual motives, organisational structures, systems and policies, but arises from an inherently complex synergistic interplay of multiple factors' (Monrouxe et al., 2011:587).

Based on Foucault's (1977) idea of normalization, and interpreting this as a 'legitimation through competence', Evetts (2003:406) drew on Fournier's (1999) suggestion that a new appeal of professionalism was choosing to act in particular ways that complied with 'appropriate identities'. In this way, although there was an impression of autonomy, this was underpinned by compliance to accountability and to particular behaviours, in order to conform to a corporate identity. Where autonomy was positioned within a network of accountability, Fournier suggested that

the appeal is to a myth or an ideology of professionalism which includes aspects such as exclusive ownership of an area of expertise, autonomy and discretion in work practices and occupational control of work. In fact, the reality of the professionalism that is actually envisaged is very different.

(Fournier, 1999:280)

For contemporary professionals, these ideas indicate a growing tension between professions as a public services and demands of managerialism and marketisation in commodification of such services. In this way, occupations which practitioners have chosen as a vocation (Weber, 1978) in order to contribute to societal benefit, have become constrained by competitive, economically driven market forces. This may be exemplified in an individualisation of practitioners as a measurable input/output resource (Lyotard, 1984) and a consequent restriction of collective autonomy to respond appropriately to ethical dilemmas or particular needs of members of society that the profession is tasked to serve. To examine the reasons why this situation has developed for professions, the next two parts of this section discuss the influences and implications of marketisation, managerialism and professionalisation.

### 3.3.2 Marketisation and managerialism

From the 1970s and 1980s, Anglo-American neoliberal influences of marketisation, managerialism and individualisation began to impact on ways in which professions were perceived in the UK. Perkin (1990) explained that during this period, economic recession brought a critical post-Fordist review of services and markets, leading to a reaction against 'power, privilege and pretensions' of specific groups supported by the state. Fordism involved standardised mass production, centrally planned, scientifically measured and governed by top-down bureaucracies, in which goods were supplied to mass markets with limited consumer choice. In post-Fordism, the principles moved towards flexibility of manufacture and distribution, involving sub-contracted organisations to undertake non-essential work. Edwards (1993) argued that post-Fordist changes in market production contributed to the rate of change in workplace organisation and requirements for learning.

The economic necessity for greater flexibility and innovation are resulting in and from new organisational forms. These entail the breakdown of job demarcations and pyramidal bureaucracies. Multi-skilled flexible workers are seen as the key to these changes wherein as demands change so workers are able to drop old tasks and take up new ones. To make this happen there is a need for continuous training, for



the support and development of lifelong learners and the workplace to be actively constructed as a learning organisation.

(Edwards, 1993:179)

Thorpe, Edwards and Hanson (1993) suggested that employer-led control of learning asked participants to adopt knowledge and behaviours which were selected as appropriate by employers and that adopting these approaches was rewarded with qualifications. Drawing from Gramsci (1971), the authors argued that in an employer-controlled managerial situation, learning in work could involve dominance by consent. 'The privileging of some forms of knowledge, attitudes and practices over others has been identified as central to the means by which the dominance of some interests in society over others is consented to rather than imposed' (Thorpe et al., 1993:3).

By the 1980s and 1990s, Thatcherism in the UK had contributed to rising unemployment, loss of industry, cultures of individualism, societal division and moral control as opposed to social responsibility (Ledwith & Springett, 2010). The authors asserted that Thatcherism promoted neoliberalist free market policies which led to a decline in the UK welfare state, where 'notions of collective social responsibility ... gave way to a competitive culture driven by individualism and consumerism' (2010:43). Marketisation of public sector services, a legacy of the Thatcher era, presented challenges for professionals who were increasingly required to structure education, health and social services within cost effective and competitive models (Giddens, 2009). For UK public sector professions, economic recession, cuts in public services and a decline in the negotiating power of unions meant that such professions and professionals were subject to ever more pressure to conform to government policy directives in order to retain services and jobs.

A further development was that with increasing numbers of occupations as professions took place, administrative public services became professions in their own right (Giddens, 2009; Evetts, 2003). In this way, administrative occupations which had previously supported the work of professionals began through a rise in managerialism in organisations to become 'new professions', in some contexts competing with or controlling the work of 'old' professionals. Additionally, through the advance of new technologies, 'old' professionals

began to take on previously clerical tasks of producing and filing increasing quantities of documentation, which had an unintended impact on the workload and responsibilities of both old and new types of professionals. Managerial principles of target setting, measurement and accountability presented possibilities of determining norms and identifying deviation from norms in practice, although this could not take account of every complexity in changing societal needs. In particular, where measurement was carried out using new technologies, wide-scale comparisons became possible, and such approaches have introduced managerial controls over professional practices (Miller, 1990).

Scanlon (2011: 3), citing Deem (2001) and Davies, (2003), argued that new managerialism contributed a reconstruction of professional practice where the interests of efficiencies take control over effectiveness. 'New managerialism, its adherents claim, is about efficiency and effectiveness ... its critics argue that it has led to increased accountability, surveillance and control'. Within a democratic professional structure, effectiveness would necessitate participation in decision-making, whereas in an autocratic organisation, effective practice would involve decisions made by managers and instructions carried out by employees, with limited or no input (Lewin & Lippitt, 1938).

In this way, Davies (2003:92) argued that new managerialism has contributed to an increase in accountability and measurable outcomes in public services. This meant that the workforce had to respond to required, specified outputs, a demand which has contributed to the decline of professional autonomy. Supporters of the approach argue that new managerialism is necessary to increase efficiency and effectiveness, whereas critics have concerns about control and command in professional work. Beckman and Cooper (2004) argued that in response to new managerialism, administration takes precedence over professional decision-making in order to meet economic demands, rather than participant needs. For practitioners in an administratively controlled organisation, a normative interpretation of professional practice is suppressed rather than supported.

In an opposing argument, Exwothy and Halford (1999) challenged what was, in their view, stereotypical ideas that professionals and managers have separate goals and identities. They proposed that opposing perspectives of 'managerialism' as dependent on power-

based, hierarchical, bureaucratic structures, and 'professionalism' as reliant on specialist knowledge and expertise, were unrealistic views of what they termed a 'new managerialism', which incorporated efficiency and effectiveness. This approach may, however, pay insufficient attention to ethical practice, in that the authors do not take into account the moral responsibilities of public service professions to society, as a remit of lower priority in an economically-focused administrative construct. Rather than use a term 'new managerialism' as all-encompassing, it might be relevant to consider public service and administrative roles as complementary, rather than either opposing or merged, in terms of their respective ethical and economic priorities.

### 3.3.3 Professionalisation

The concluding part of the section considers professionalisation, as an increased trend in occupations that seek recognition as professions. Explaining this trend, Evetts (2003) argued that occupations desire to become professions for reasons of authority, autonomy, parity with other occupations and to achieve societal status. For some authors, a process of professionalisation was originally thought to follow a linear path of progressive stages. Wilensky (1964) and Caplow (1964) proposed that this process included the establishment of a professional association, provision of formalised training and the adoption of a code of ethics. For Caplow, this might also involve a change of name for the occupation, and lobbying for recognition and resources. By the 1970s, linear formats of professionalisation, like trait theories of professions, were rejected as socio-culturally specific to the USA and non-generalisable across wider contexts (Evetts, 1999). A common feature across the USA and Europe has been the control of markets through professionalisation, operationalised mainly by the state in Europe, and through professional associations in the USA and the UK. In the Anglo-American model, markets were expanded or restricted by negotiation between the professional association, the state and universities, and in the instigation of joint academic accreditation and professional licensing arrangements (ibid).

The professionalisation of occupations has contributed to an increase in two continuing learning requirements for workplace practitioners. One concerns advanced levels of academic accreditation for career progression; the characteristics of this trend were

discussed in Chapter 2, and implications in relation to credentialism are considered in section 3.5 of this chapter. The second consequence of professionalisation for continuing professional learning has been the expansion of performative setting and measurement of learning outcomes, and auditing of practice through competency frameworks. The development and implications of processes of standardisation and performativity on professionals and professional learning are considered in the next section.

### 3.4 Competency and performativity

An influence of standardisation across UK occupations has had significant impact on initial and continuing learning for professions. From the 1980s onwards, the UK government introduced an implementation of standards in all occupational areas, linking these to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in order to standardise relevant curricula, training and assessment. The method of standardisation focused on determining competency in specific practice capabilities, where 'competence' was defined as 'the ability to do a particular activity to a prescribed standard' (Working Group on Vocational Qualifications, 1986). In Scotland, academic qualifications were validated across characteristics at increasing levels within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and professionally validated against competency frameworks produced by the relevant professional body. In adopting competency models, Talbot (2004) argued that problems have arisen from a lack of understanding that 'competency' is different to 'competence'. Competency models, he explained, were derived from industry performance measurement techniques, where through the identification of specific tasks, the learner is assessed on satisfactory completion of particular aspects of work, as opposed to competence as an overall perspective of a practitioner's expertise. Talbot (2004: 588) asserted that 'such a competency construct is a learning paradigm: it is not the same as competence, which is a step on the road to professional excellence'. From the initial definition given by the 1986 UK Working Group, 'a prescribed standard' does not have the same connotations as striving for excellence.

Jarvis, Holford and Griffin (2003) explained that professional learning based on the assessment of competencies and performance measurement approaches is contexted in ideas of behaviourism. Behaviourism was adopted as a means of identifying learning on a

basis of measurement of outcomes, stemming from positivist belief in the value of empirically measurable data. In this context, competence has been expressed as 'an action, outcome or behaviour that a person should be able to demonstrate in assessment criteria derived from functional analysis of occupational practice' (Employment Department, 1991:1). Wenger (1998), drawing on Skinner's (1974) ideas of behaviour modification, rejected behaviourism as a form of learning based on control and adaptive response. In Wenger's argument, competency-based learning is a form of training that requires conformity to a set of practices, and while valid in certain circumstances where exact behaviours are required, as a generic approach to learning its effect was to restrict rather than extend learning.

Smith (1996, 2005), agreeing with Talbot (2004), argued that the terms competence and competency have been conflated and in the process, had lost an identification of '*virtus*' or virtue, which he explained as 'a general sense of excellence and goodness'. Smith explained the original meaning of competence (plural: competences) as a holistic identification of social, moral and intellectual capacities, whereas competency (plural: competencies) referred to abilities to undertake specific tasks. Smith's indication of the similarity of the plural terms reinforced a suggestion that the two concepts are often misinterpreted and used interchangeably, and moreover, that both concepts are divisible into component parts. Agreeing competence as holistic, Talbot's (2004) concern was that an over reliance on reductionist competency models had impacted not only on how professionals practise, but also on ways in which they understand practice. Addressing this concern, Cheetham and Chivers (1996:25) suggested a need to recognise 'meta-competencies', which they suggested include communication, problem solving and creative analysis, to expand the restricted nature of competency measurement. In a concern that competency-led professional education responds to a predetermined set of practice skills and behaviours which adversely affects needs assessment of those in receipt of public services, Barnett (1994) suggested that competency frameworks excluded participation in determination of and response to need: 'clients (are) reduced to recipients of those skills rather than joint authors of the services they require'. Drawing from Foucault's (1980) relationships between professional power, knowledge and control, Barnett (1994:80) proposed that performative learning could lead to a form of control over professionals, which served the needs of the

state before the needs of clients. He explained this as ‘the manipulation of clients not just in the interests of the profession, but on behalf of the state as a form of control or amelioration’. Barnett’s (1994) view was that competency models provide a means of state intervention in the processes of higher education, arguing that task-based fragmentation of professional learning served to reduce, rather than enable, criticality through reasoning, reflection and action.

A further concern for professional learning lies in increased workloads created by performative requirements, where professionals are required not only to practice effectively, but also to continually report their effective and efficient practice. In research on the effects of performativity in education, Ball (2013:60) noted increased work-related stress, through more bureaucracy in paperwork and report writing; the surveillance of work and staff outputs and changed social relationships in the workplace. A particular point noted by Ball was a widening gap in values between managerial staff who were concerned about budgets, and education practitioners who prioritised the well-being and achievement of their students.

To further examine concerns about performativity, the potential impact of competency models on ethical practice is considered next.

#### 3.4.1 Performativity and ethics

In *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard (1984) argued against separations between functional and critical ideas of knowledge, suggesting that assessing competence in education ‘the goal is no longer truth, but performativity, that is, the best possible input/output equation’ (Lyotard, 1984:46). Lyotard’s discussion of post-modern legitimisation of knowledge in a computerised or cybernetic age was based on the premise that ‘grand narratives’ or meta-narratives which previously underpinned political and ethical decisions in societies have been replaced by Wittgenstein’s (1984) notion of ‘language games’, which represent multiple small narratives or linguistic codes through which societal groups moderate understanding and organise behaviours. Access to internet databases and networks has radically altered global availabilities of knowledge, which reduces the specialist monopolisation of knowledge within professions. Lyotard (1984) argued that speed of access to knowledge retrieval

became a power component in such a system, along with abilities to operate technologies and select appropriate materials.

In consideration of the implications of performativity on professional ethics, Lyotard's (1984) concern was that legitimization of knowledge must also provide legitimization of public decision-making. Where this process was based on performativity, Lyotard argued that there was insufficient reference to ethics in the equation. Agreeing the impact of performativity on professional ethics, O'Neill (2002) agreed that performance indicators have had a detrimental effect on the ways professions and institutions behave, in that they undermine professional judgement and institutional autonomy. Incentives become efficiency driven rather than based on actual or perceived need. Suggesting that indicators are selected for ease of measurement and control rather than ability or accuracy in measuring quality of performance, O'Neill considered that professionals misdirect their energies towards responding to practice indicators instead of acting as professionals and that this leads to lack of trust in professions and professionals.

Much of the mistrust and criticism now directed at professionals and public institutions complains about their diligence in responding to incentives to which they have been required to respond rather than pursuing the intrinsic requirements for being good nurses and teachers, good doctors and police officers, good lecturers and social workers. But what else are they to do under present regimes of accountability? In the end, the new culture of accountability provides incentives for arbitrary and unprofessional choices.

(O'Neill, 2002:3)

Solutions to these problems, O'Neill suggested, lie in repairing damaged trust, fostering self-governance and ensuring that practice assessment is conducted by those who have both time and experience to do so effectively. Arguing trust as the key to professionalism, O'Neill explained that those holding public office in the UK were required to conform to the seven 'Nolan' principles of 'selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership' (Committee on Standards in Public Life, 1995:14; updated 2015:23), where trustworthiness was core to all of these concepts. For O'Neill, there was a need for

'intelligent accountability', which incorporated self-efficacy and agency in taking responsibility, making decisions and carrying out professional judgements in order to regain public trust. O'Neill argued that in determination of professionalism, contemporary accreditation of professional practice had become subject to reductionist standardisation of practice competency, which focused on sufficiency rather than excellence, and responded to pre-set targets rather than development of a critical awareness of what constitutes good practice.

From a similar perspective, Cough (2002) suggested Aristotle's concept of *phronēsis* as a necessary factor of being professional, particularly in response to complexities of change.

The problem is thus one of what does it mean to be professional in a changing climate of jobs, communication, organisational structures. If Schön's response to the professional crisis is experiential learning or learning how to learn, then the response to what does it mean to be professional is *phronēsis*.

(Cough, 2002:12)

Cough's definition of *phronēsis* has been adopted as the interpretation of this term for the study: 'phronēsis is translated as prudence, sagacity, or most commonly, as practical wisdom. Not just wisdom of knowing that, but wisdom of knowing how to do the right thing, in right place at right time' (ibid). Gardener et al. (2001) also agreed that 'authentic alignment' for professions exists when cultural values are in accord with the knowledge, skills, ethical values and practices of the professional context, and when the needs of the stake holders match the services of the profession. 'When these conditions exist', the authors proposed, 'individual practitioners are free to operate at their best; morale is high and the professional realm flourishes' (Gardner et al., 2001:27). In Drucker's (1977) outline of the relationship between efficiency and effectiveness, he argued that efficiency involved 'doing things right', whereas effectiveness meant 'doing the right things'.

For UK local authorities, the latter concepts were linked with economy, in an anecdotal three 'e's of 'economy, efficiency and effectiveness' required in achieving best value in services. Arguably this phrase is missing a fourth 'e', that of ethical practice. In Scotland, 'best value' became a legal requirement for local authorities under the Local Government in Scotland



Act, 2003 (SG, 2003). Economy as value for money, balanced against efficiency and effectiveness as ethical perceptions of the value of work may have reinforced an ongoing tension where financial inputs and outputs were prioritised against standardised efficiencies of practice. Drucker argued that confusion between efficiency and effectiveness restricted rather than advanced progress, where efficiency involved a focus of 'doing things right' – but with emphasis on less important work, rather than on 'doing the right things' as significant and essential practice for societal well-being. In standardisation of practice, it could be the case that time and effort is spent on evidencing efficiency rather than effectiveness.

The aspect of Aristotle's concept which was missing from Drucker's idea was 'doing things in the right way', which is a different to Drucker's 'doing things right'. The 'right way' in an ethical sense might be less efficient; for example, collaboration on a piece of work might be less time-efficient, but have stronger outcomes of relational reciprocity.

A second set of Drucker's ideas that developed a theme of collaboration relevant to continuing learning and practice across professions was the concept of objective setting and measuring progress. Drucker (1954, 2006) argued for the setting clear objectives with, rather than for, employees, as essential to good management practice. The process of participative goal setting and measuring progress in a context of the organisation's objectives and principles enabled the worker to contribute to decision-making and take responsibility for action. This collaborative approach in setting and measuring goals, Drucker argued, encouraged motivation and empowerment of employees, producing higher job satisfaction and a shared commitment to the organisation and its principles. Without participation in determining goals, or in response to imposed standards, the possibility of repetitive efficiency might be achieved - doing unimportant things the right way - but without effective practice of doing the right things, and thereby expanding the knowledge capacity of the individual and the organisation (Drucker, 1977). Drucker coined the phrase 'knowledge workers' as divergent and creative thinkers, working with information processes and products in addressing non-routine problems, predicting that creative thinkers would be essential to future success of organisations: 'the most valuable asset of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century institution...will be its knowledge workers and their productivity' (Drucker, 1999).

In this discussion, potentially detrimental effects of performativity and imposed standardised competency frameworks on ethical professional practice were considered. The next section on academic credentialism examines a growing trend of academic study as a form of continuing professional learning, and implications this may have for societal division.

### 3.5 Academic credentialism

In this section, the concept of credentialism is discussed. Giddens and Sutton (2013) asserted that in contemporary societies, professionals, managers and administrators have well-paid jobs, secure careers and that separation between professions, managerial and administrative roles and other occupations is becoming more pronounced. They considered that the primary means of gaining status was through the acquisition of credentials, as degrees or similar qualifications, which allowed practitioners to join a professional association of practitioners that protected both exclusivity and privilege of status. The authors identified three major dimensions of professionalism as selective entry to those who met specified criteria through attainment of qualifications, as subsequent membership of a professional association that monitors performance, and as exclusivity of the market position through exclusion of non-members.

Entry to the profession is restricted to those who meet a strict set of criteria (qualifications); a professional association monitors and disciplines member's conduct and performance [...]. As a result, self-governing professional associations are able to exclude unwanted individuals and so enhance the market position of their own members.

(Giddens & Sutton, 2013:503)

The idea of the credential, taken to mean an accredited higher education qualification, is of particular relevance as a boundary object between the academy, profession and workplace in this study. In terms of a process of credentialism, Bills & Brown (2011: 1-4) suggested three broad meanings. The first related to the significance of credentials in gaining employment within a societal structure: 'the extent to which societies allocate individuals to slots in the occupational hierarchy on the basis of educational qualifications'. The authors

proposed credential inflation as a second interpretation, where an increase in educational requirements for jobs overtakes the required skills for those practices. A third interest, described by the authors as 'non-linear wage returns to schooling', or 'sheepskin effects' (Habermariz, 2003) concerned situations of reward to people who hold qualifications, without consideration of differences between those with experience but no qualifications, or vice versa. This proposed the credential as a form of 'disguise' where the qualification represented apparent rather than actual knowledge and ability. Bills & Brown (2011) recognised the implications of value judgement in relation to employment selection against the latter two interpretations and questioned why this aspect of sociology has not attracted further debate.

In earlier work, Brown (2001) argued that credentialism questioned theories of individualistic human capital and Marxist capitalist-controlled structuralist ideas of education. Rather than perceiving education systems as a means of determining merit according to skills or capacities, credentialist theory considered that degree qualifications may by-pass concrete work skills and move into a position of privilege, which may or may not reflect ability to perform. The key points of credentialist theory for Brown were that qualifications became linked directly to occupational positions of power; skills or experience were held to be less significant than professional accreditation, and that credential inflation contributed in turn to educational expansion. He explained that credential inflation occurred where numbers of people with qualifications exceeded the availability of professional or managerial jobs. The value of qualifications then decreased, resulting in students returning to study for professional qualifications or advanced degrees. In addition, credential inflation (Hirsch, 1977; Collins, 1979) occurred where practicing professionals were required to improve their qualifications in the workplace and 'invest more time in ascending the hierarchy to the scarcest and most valued credential' (Brown et al., 1997:9). Collins (1994: 146) suggested that 'if in future everyone has PhDs or MBAs...the competition would move on to still higher degrees'. Accepting the benefits of education to societies, this problem might be exacerbated by increasing numbers of UK occupations seeking professional degree-entry status, and subsequently, more young people progressing from school to university, rather than entering a range of non-degree occupations.

Torstendhal (1990) agreed that 'exclusivity, group closure and societal division' from academic endorsement of professional training presents three problems for professional and societal identities. First, he argued that skills learned in the workplace could lead to expert practice, but without academic endorsement, the practitioner would be unlikely to gain professional status. Second, monopolisation of services in professions could create a closed market where the only point of entry is through academic achievement. Third, concern with qualifications could focus on processes of academic accreditation, rather than responding to identification of skills required by the workforce.

For Brown (2000) a credentialised 'opportunity trap' was widening social divisions in countries which have subscribed to neoliberal free market principles. Brown argued that a rise in the UK middle classes since the 1950s had raised expectations of young people from middle class backgrounds of a university education followed by a professional career, but increasingly there were not enough professional jobs to satisfy the credential output. He suggested that emphasis on credentials as an economic goal meant that a democratic ideal of educational opportunity for social justice, achievement and mobility was deteriorating (Brown, 2000).

Brown drew from Durkheim's (1922) view of education as a means of socialisation and argued that selection for employment was dominated by credentials on two counts. First, that credentials were the favoured method of academic selection, and second, that employers tended to identify levels of qualification in relation to behavioural traits of motivation, effort and commitment, and the effective organisation and communication of ideas. In making a distinction between acquisitive and inquisitive learning, Brown drew from Dore's (1976) concept of the 'diploma disease', in which Dore argued for 'schooling as education' rather than 'schooling as qualification'. In the latter, he argued that the student

is not concerned with mastery; but with being certified as having mastered...and the learning and reproducing is all just a means to an end, of getting a certificate which is a passport to a coveted job, a status, an income.

(Dore, 1976:8)

Agreeing education in itself to be an advantage, Dore argued against a means-end approach to credentialised education. He proposed that Maslow's (1943) concept of self-actualisation corresponded with the higher aspirations of education, whereas Maslow's idea of motivation in response to deficiency was aligned with a need to gain qualifications for societal status. Dore argued that credentialised education was driven by external variables, thereby compromising opportunities for growth through self-actualisation.

Arguing in favour of credentials, Freidson (2001) suggested that academic qualifications had significance in societies as uniform terms of reference. Recognising credentialism as 'the device which sustains monopoly and social closure in the professional labour market', Freidson defended the common usage of what he termed the 'training credential' as a necessary means of determining selection for specific occupations, on the basis that 'some method must be used to determine qualifications and the right to practice' (2001:204). Grubb and Lazerson (2006) agreed that qualifications provided links between the marketplace and the educational sector, between career aspirations and work experience. Credentials, they argued, presented agreed terms of reference and expectation for employers, educators and students.

For a perspective of continuing learners, these authors considered that links between work and learning were often inadequate and that misalignment between educational qualifications and employment requirements increased boundaries between the workplace and academy. Their view was that academic institutions may have different expectations and requirements to those of the workplace and academic goals often take precedence over occupational goals. In the 1990s, Eraut had proposed that the spectrum of propositional knowledge, critical inquiry and debate required by universities was different to the situated knowledge and specialist skills that underpin professional expertise. Where professions had moved to degree entry, universities and professional bodies negotiated the percentages of academic study as theoretical knowledge and professional learning as situated knowledge and skills acquisition in each degree; and for the most part knowledge as theory was prioritised over learning through practice (Eraut, 1994).

As a response to pre-qualifying credential inflation in the 1970s, Dore (1976) suggested that practitioners might initially enter work through a series of selection processes involving aptitude tests, and at a later stage, engage in mid-career work-based or study-break learning. While Dore's ideas about 'work first and study later' have been reflected in trainee apprenticeship schemes for public services in the later part of the twentieth century, such schemes seem to have declined in recent decades through increased emphasis on degree level qualifications. On the other hand, opportunities for work-based learning have expanded, offering a means of linking existing practice-based expertise to theory in creation of new knowledge, as opposed to application of theory to practice (Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Boud & Solomon, 2001).

In sociological terms, credentialism describes a process whereby academic qualifications and licence to practise are prerequisites for entry to higher status professional occupations. As a primary means of professionalisation through the accreditation of learning, arguments about credentialism question ways in which formal recognition of educational achievement, underpin societal structures and impact on ideologies of democracy and social inclusion as espoused theories of western societies. Ideas of credentialism stem from Weber's (1922) analysis of social stratification, in particular the potential for societal privilege resulting from achievement of educational qualifications.

The elaboration of diplomas from universities, business and engineering colleges and the universal clamour for the creation of further educational certificates in all fields serve the formation of a privileged stratum in bureaus and in offices...such certificates...support their holders' claims to the monopolisations of socially and economically advantageous positions.

(Weber, 1922, 1978:1000)

Bourdieu (1979) extended Weber's ideas in the argument that societal stratification is explained through four forms of capital: economic, social, symbolic and cultural. Whereas economic capital can determine levels of income and material property, Bourdieu suggested that wealth cannot fully explain class distinctions. Bourdieu argued that cultural capital, representing distinctions in taste within a particular class, creates lifestyle choices that

reinforce and perpetuate difference. He suggested that middle class parents who have particular tastes in education and cultural media expect their children to go to university and enter professional employment. Bourdieu (1977: 17) identified the credential as objectification of cultural capital, arguing that the academic qualification provides 'a certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture'. In this respect, Bourdieu argued that credentials allow comparison, succession and even exchange between cultural and economic forms of capital.

Bourdieu's (1977) idea of social capital was that it reinforced cultural norms through the creation of support networks for individuals and groups, whereas symbolic capital acts as an indicator of status and social class. His proposal explained that for privileged groups in society, cultural, economic and social norms supported expectations of higher education and professional careers. Following this argument, credentials as boundary objects present the symbolic transaction of status and delineate social, cultural and economic divisions between social classes. Bourdieu did not specifically discuss moral or ethical considerations as aspects of social or cultural capitals; accepting that these are intrinsic to cultural norms and beliefs, they may warrant further explanation in Bourdieu's work in terms of the expanding and declining influences of world religious beliefs on cultural, social and symbolic capitals.

The concept of credentialism is relevant to continuing learning for a number of reasons that have been discussed in this part of the review of literature. In Bourdieu's (1977) argument, credentials represent boundary objects, passports or tickets from one situation to another, where boundaries in this case are divisions in society, formed by money and privilege.

Without the 'piece of paper', potential for economic or social status is less secure; with the credentials, divisions could deepen between those who have academic qualifications and those who do not. On the other hand, without opportunities for academic education, societies may be less skilled, less able to secure employment or to advance knowledge. For ongoing learning in professions, these two sets of arguments may exist.

Where continuing professional learning takes a form of studying for advanced academic qualifications, there may be possibilities of division between practitioners who have more

credentials than experience and those who have more experience than qualifications. In a credentialised society, practitioners with advanced qualifications are more likely to dominate in terms of promoted posts, and thus have more power and control over those with knowledge, skills and practical judgement gained through experience. Where theoretical rather than experiential knowledge predominates, professionals may be ill-equipped to deal with the increasing complexities of practice. As an example, a novice pilot who has passed theoretical exams but has limited flying experience is likely to be less efficient or reliable than a knowledgeable and experienced pilot who has logged 10,000 flying hours. The latter pilot would be more prepared to cope with unexpected challenges, following Aristotle's proposal that mastery is formed out of theory and experience, and that one or the other is insufficient. It is recognised that transferable knowledge and skills are learned through theoretical study, where the processes of learning and of meta-learning are significant products of propositional knowledge, where applied in professional development. The outcomes of such processes are discussed next, as graduate attributes.

### 3.5.1 Graduate attributes

Where arguments about credentialism problematize an overemphasis on academic qualifications, the benefits of academic study also warrant consideration. In terms of knowledge, skills, ethical principles, each profession could argue contexted benefits; to draw together some general benefits of academic study to society, generic graduate attributes are considered. Graduate attributes were defined by Bowden et al. (2000) in relation to students across all levels of study in university.

Graduate attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future.

(Bowden, Hart, King, Trigwell & Watts, 2000; cited in Barrie, 2004:262)



Determining the attributes of Scottish graduates for the twenty-first century, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education in Scotland (2011) drew on a sector-wide investigation and proposed eight generic attributes as common elements threaded through the principles, ethos and strategic priorities of Scottish higher education institutions. These were outlined as:

- Lifelong learning
- Research, scholarship and enquiry
- Employability and career development
- Global citizenship
- Communication and information literacy
- Ethical, social and professional understanding
- Personal and intellectual autonomy
- Collaboration, leadership and teamwork

(QAA Scotland, 2011:2)

Of particular interest to continuing learning were higher education's aims to foster lifelong learning and ethical, social and professional understanding. According to Eraut (1994:7), 'the general education associated with universities, eg maturity, intellectual development, pluralism, cosmopolitanism, has become increasingly valued, not least by students'. In the QAA's compilation of graduate attributes there seemed to be similarities to the process of determining a series of traits as characteristics of professions. Five traits of professions, drawn from a range of twentieth century authors, which were discussed in section 3.2 and summarised in Table 3, were identified as knowledge, expertise, autonomy, association and altruism. Relationships between these factors and attributes of learning, employability, citizenship, ethical understanding, personal autonomy and collaboration could be determined. Aspects of professional altruism were apparent in aims of citizenship and ethical understanding, and in Bowden et al.'s (2000) proposal of 'preparing graduates as agents of social good'. Factors of professions which were absent from the academic attributes included association; collective autonomy and ethical responsibilities; and learning from others, as experience in situated learning contexts (Eraut, 1994). In the 2011 QAA attributes, despite reference to collaboration and teamwork, there was an explicit focus on individual rather than collective autonomy, indicated in the term 'personal and intellectual autonomy'.

The QAA project of determining attributes recognised established qualities of critical thinking as central to academic study, but added a need to establish 'flexible competencies needed for a knowledge economy' and the contribution of higher education to 'culture, citizenship and intellectual growth in Scotland' (QAA, 2011:1). In this analysis, higher education has interests beyond individual accreditation and towards the good of society. As a transforming influence in society, academic study offers a perspective of ways in which education contributes to society, balanced against individualised concerns of credentialism. Nonetheless, the arguments of credentialism are relevant as caveats to continuing professional learning, particularly in where professions aim to move towards ever higher levels of qualification for career progression.

This chapter has reviewed historical and sociological developments, influences and trends in continuing learning. To examine ways in which learning is socially constructed in situated contexts, and progresses developmentally in relation to skills, knowledge and ethical practice, the next chapter of the study concerns theories of learning that underpin continuing learning in professions.

## Chapter 4 Professional Learning

From interests in the historical development and ideological challenges of professions, this chapter concerns the relevance of learning theories to the study. The chapter addresses processes and parameters of continuing learning, in relation to the research questions about characteristics, contexts, boundaries and synergies of continuing professional learning, and necessary factors of learning for common good. The chapter begins with an overview of the social constructivist paradigm that informs the selection and organisation of learning theories, and then presents an outline of the five sections of the chapter.

Social constructivists believe that epistemologies of knowledge and learning are formed through social interaction and that cultural norms, traditions, languages and beliefs created by such interaction affect the ways in which people understand, relate to and act within the world (Rogoff, 1990). Vygotsky (1978) proposed social constructivist learning as an active, socially mediated process of creating meaning through relationships with others and their environments. As a dialogical and interactive learning process, inter-subjectivity provided the basis for communication, allowing distribution of new knowledge within groups (Vygotsky, 1978). Wertsch (1985) suggested that Vygotsky's ideas could be grouped in three main assertions concerning learning as higher mental functioning: that learning is conducted through mediating tools or artefacts; that it is grounded in social contexts, and is developmental in nature. To expand on these three concepts, Vygotsky's (1978) theories of mediation are outlined in section 4.1, followed by Engeström's (1987a, 2001) ideas of expansive, socially contexted learning in activity systems in section 4.2, and Bateson's (1972) emergent, developmental levels of learning, in section 4.3. The idea of contradiction (Engeström, 2009; Giddens, 1979) as a key feature of developmental learning is discussed in section 4.4. Whereas these theories inform key theoretical characteristics that underpin professional learning and highlight the significance of contradiction in boundary crossing between learning contexts, normative processes of developing ethical behaviours were not sufficiently explained in these sets of ideas. To examine ethical learning towards societal good as a particular concept of 'being professional', the development of professional ethical approaches is discussed in section 4.5. This latter section begins with Aristotle's concept of

phronēsis and its relevance to continuing professional learning. A series of contemporary learning models which have a bearing on how practitioners learn about ethical decision-making is then considered, drawing from the work of Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986); Dreyfus (2001); Kohlberg (1986); Bronfenbrenner (1994); King and Kitchener (1994), Cottone (2001) and Durkheim (1958).

#### 4.1 Mediated learning

The concept of mediation was central to Vygotsky's social theory of learning. Where Vygotsky initially considered the effects of a mediating artefact on memory, the idea contributed to his belief that all learning is dependent on and emergent from socially constructed media (Wertsch, 1985). This represented an ontological perspective of ways in which humans perceive, understand and are influenced by culturally represented media, as Daniels (2008:4) asserted: 'mediators serve as the means by which the individual acts upon and is acted upon by social, cultural and historical factors in the course of ongoing human activity'.

The political and cultural context of Vygotsky's work in 1920s Soviet Union meant that his ideas were influenced by Marxist ideologies (Wertsch, 1985). Marx's idea of three elements of the labour process as subject, activity and instruments or tools required for work, have similarities to concepts of subject, object and mediation in learning. 'The elementary factors of the labour-process are 1) the personal activity of man, ie work itself; 2) the subject of that work, and 3) its instruments' (Marx, 1867: V1.3.1). Vygotsky may have adapted this notion of tools of work as instruments of mind, which enable the subject to achieve a learning object through a process of mediation, and in the process indicated the culturally situated location of learning.

In Vygotsky's (1981: 138) initial idea, mediation was represented as a 'psychological tool' or 'mnemonic' to aid or enhance recollection of an idea. In Figure 3, the relationship shown between A to B represented stimulus-response learning. Point X represented an artefact or tool which enabled subject A as the learner to achieve object B.

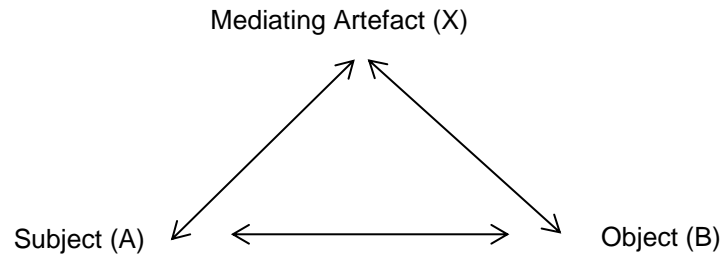


Figure 4 Vygotsky's concept of mediation (adapted from Daniels, 2008:5)

In this concept, the mnemonic was a structured material artefact, although Vygotsky went on to describe mediating factors as 'artificial formations, not organic or individual', describing these as apparent in 'language, various systems for counting, mnemonic techniques, algebraic symbol systems, works of art; writing; schemes, diagrams, maps and mechanical drawings, all sorts of conventional signs' (Vygotsky, 1981:137). In this latter explanation, Vygotsky made no specific distinction between material or abstract artefacts, accepting that each form pertained to socio-cultural influences. The significance of Vygotsky's ideas of mediation were that it linked the individual both to society and the materiality of society, as Engeström (2001:134) explained: 'the individual could no longer be understood without his or her cultural means, and the society could no longer be understood without the agency of individuals who use and produce artefacts'.

To address distinctions between implicit and explicit forms of mediation, Wertsch (2007) explained that explicit mediation was represented by externally situated and collectively constructed material artefacts; and implicit mediation was internally situated in thought and was communicated through speech. For Wertsch (2007:183), implicit mediation involved 'signs, particularly natural language, whose primary function is communication, that are part of a pre-existing independent stream of communicative action that becomes integrated with other forms of communicative action'. Wertsch's explanation was that communicative action, as the process of interpersonal communication, allowed explicit and implicit mediation to interact through thought, speech and material constructs as interconnected and indivisible. From this perspective, learning for professions would necessitate an interconnection between implicit and explicit mediation, in a holistic process of communicative action.

Hasan (2002) echoed Wertsch's proposal that visible mediation was material and explicit, whereas invisible mediation represented the tacit, everyday negotiation of communicative human existence. From Wertsch and Hasan's ideas, it could be suggested that invisible, implicit mediation concerns the 'processes' of learning and visible, explicit mediating artefacts the 'products', not only as constructed materials for the purposes of learning but also as learning outputs. Examples of mediating products used in continuing professional learning might be work prepared to evidence professional standards, whereas in an academic learning context, products might be texts or written assignments. Mediation as 'process' in continuing learning might involve dialogue between a mentor and practitioner or tutor and student; structured debate in workplace meetings, and tacit learning through observation or in every day conversation about work. In this respect, 'product' has a sense of completion of a constructed output, whereas mediation as 'process' proposes further action and change.

A distinctive feature of socially constructed mediation was identified as the possibility of external control of learning. Vygotsky explained mediating artefacts as external controls of the learning process through socially constructed media, or artefacts used to 'control behaviour from the outside' (Daniels, 2008:7). In contrast, Hasan (2002) argued that learning discourse was conducted by socially positioned actors, who both shaped, and were shaped by, the cultural historical influences of mediation. In continuing learning, this suggested that practitioners both influence and are influenced by explicit, visible product materials of learning and implicit, invisible, processes of communicative learning. In this respect, a significant aspect of learning would be to challenge mediation as control, and to consider contradictions apparent in the means of learning as well as in the context of work.

Vygotsky (1978) saw opposing forces as part of a holistic process, necessary for dialectic analysis for change. A dialectic synthesis of qualitative interpretations for Vygotsky meant taking opposing or contradictory systems as one coherent entity: 'for Vygotsky, any two opposing directions of thought served as opposites united with one another in the continuous whole - the discourse of ideas' (Van der Veer and Valsiner 1991, 392-3). In this sense, mediation as a continuous process relates to a concept of continuing learning as ongoing growth and development through discourse around contradiction, rather than as a compliant

learning, which aims to produce standardised material products. Vygotsky (1978:65) considered that only by examining the process of change was it possible to determine the fundamental nature or essence of something: 'only in movement does a body show what it is'. This indicated that Vygotsky's considered mediation in itself to be a process of movement, adjustment and change. Where his ideas initially concerned the mediation between subject and object in a cultural context, Vygotsky later explained the significance of progressive learning through relationships with 'more capable others' in the idea of the 'zone of proximal development', which he defined as

the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.  
(Vygotsky: 1978:86)

This concept explained the difference between what a learner could achieve without help and what could be achieved with the help of another. To achieve development, Vygotsky proposed first determining learner needs as the 'level of potential development' and second supported collaborative learning which targeted defined goals. A key aspect of Vygotsky's idea was that what was learned interpersonally could then be applied intrapersonally; or that communication with others who assist learning precedes internal processing and understanding on the part of the learner. The process of structured support commonly termed 'scaffolding' was not in fact a term used by Vygotsky, but was introduced by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976:90) in their assertion that 'scaffolding consists essentially of the adult 'controlling' those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence'. Following the latter interpretation of control, Illeris (2002) argued that the 'zone of proximal development' could be appropriated in a positivistic sense by more capable others as a means of 'academic systematism', suggesting that target setting could be appropriated by schools or governments as a means of exerting power and control over the learning process. A distinction might lie in Vygotsky's suggestion of determining goals with rather than for the learner, and in combining processes of determining need and planned action with subsequent support.

Accepting that the concept of the 'zone of proximal development', involving needs-identified and supported learning was added later by Vygotsky, his initial proposal that learning was socially constructed did not specify the roles or locations of other individuals in collective, interactive contexts. In response to this problem, Leont'ev (1978) built on Vygotsky's idea with an activity theory explaining that individuals were part of complex collective activity systems and that learning necessarily involved relationships between the individual and their location within collective networks. He developed the object as the primary motivating factor of the activity, which necessarily responded to a specified motivational need on the part of the subject.

The main thing which distinguishes one activity from another ... is the difference of their objects. It is exactly the object of an activity that gives it a determined direction. According to the terminology I have proposed, the object of an activity is its true motive.

(Leont'ev, 1978: 62)

Leont'ev argued that in work contexts, division in the process of work could lead to a separation of partial results, which might fulfil the needs of a specific, separate aspect of work, but would not meet the worker's overall needs. Leont'ev explained this as 'fractionation' or division between the action and the goal, where a fragmentation of the activity process does not meet the overall goal or object of the activity system: 'isolating the purposes and formulating actions subordinate to them leads to a seeming splitting of functions which were formerly merged with each other in motive' (Leont'ev, 1978:63). He argued that collective activity was necessary to meet the objective needs of participants and that this was formulated in the socially cohesive relationships, developed through the actual process of work. In the context of continuing learning, this argument could be applied to a functional analysis of work in determining competencies as standards of practice. Following Leont'ev's concerns, a practitioner could meet the requirements of the divided or fragmented competencies of work, but would not necessarily achieve holistic competence (Smith, 1996, 2005; Barnett, 1994). In this sense, Leont'ev argued, there was a possibility of the goal becoming subordinate to the activity, where the means becomes the end. For example, if continuing learning has an overall goal of workforce development for the benefit of society,



but individualised activities of quality assurance are prioritised, the means (ie meeting competencies) could become the end, instead of an intended aim of ensuring quality. What was required to achieve holistic learning towards shared goals, according to Leont'ev, was collective interaction; similar to the process described by Vygotsky (1978) as interpersonal communication, as a precursor to intrapersonal understanding. In an associated argument for a thriving society, Leont'ev stressed the importance of linked, not separated, theoretical knowledge and practice experience. 'In social conditions that ensure a well-rounded development of people, intellectual activity is not separated from practical activity' (Leont'ev, 1978:61). Based on Vygotsky's and Leont'ev's ideas, Engeström's concept of learning as located within a culturally and historically contexted system of activity is outlined in the next section.

#### 4.2 Socially contexted learning

Extending Vygotsky's (1978) and Leont'ev's (1978) ideas, Engeström (1987a, 2001) developed a collective artefact-mediated activity system, detailed in Figure 4.

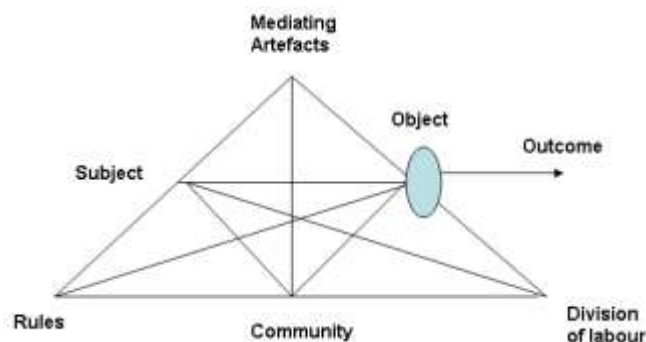


Figure 5 Second generation activity system (Leont'ev, 1978; Engeström, 1987a:78)

In this diagram, following Vygotsky, the subject achieved learning through mediation, but in this case, the processes of learning and mediation are shown to take place within a socially contexted framework of interconnected activity. In Engeström's (1987a) construct, the second-generation activity system (the first being Vygotsky's) involved six interconnected elements. In this, the 'subject' referred to actors engaged in activities and to internal thinking processes; and the 'object' to the aim and objectives of the activity. 'Rules' were indicated as guidelines or norms of the activity; 'community' as a body of actors; 'division of labour' as

social structures which impact on actors, and 'mediating artefacts' as the tools or concepts used in activities. Following Vygotsky, Engeström argued that the system explained ways in which social experience was mediated by interconnected, culturally-situated artefacts and activities, and the relationships between subject, rules, community and division of labour presented the means of mediation in a range of combinations.

Engeström's (1999, 2001) focus moved from the subject as individual agent interacting with factors of mediation, to a perspective of the subject as a group of participants within an activity system, collectively engaging with processes of mediation. Engeström summarised activity theory in relation to five principles: first, that a 'collective, mediated, object-directed activity system', positioned in a network relationship with other systems, formed the main unit of analysis. A second principle was 'multi-voicedness, in that the model was made up of multiple perspectives and cultural influences, and third 'historicity'; in that each system had a unique developing history over periods of time. Fourth, Engeström stressed the central significance of 'contradiction' in presenting a stimulus for change. He considered contradictions not as problems or conflicts, but as tensions within systems, which could develop between different elements, or in response to a change of some aspect of the system. As an example of a change that affected different parts of a system, he suggested that new technologies could first change processes of mediation and present secondary contradictions in relation to rules and relationships within division of labour. The fifth principle was that of 'expansive transformation', which Engeström described as increased collective consciousness of contradictions within a system, and consequent collaborative move towards change (Engeström, 1999; Daniels, 2008: 93-94).

Engeström (2001; 2009) drew attention to the unpredictable nature of learning in contexts of practice, arguing that as learning is not stable, but in a state of constant movement and change, it could not be predicted or defined in advance. In this idea, Engeström recognised that the challenge for learning was not towards maintenance of stability, but to be able to use contradictions as a basis for determining more effective ways of working. Engeström's (2009) expansive activity theory, extensively used in addressing boundary crossing issues in interprofessional practices, could help to explain relationships within and between wider

communities, not only workplace or professional communities of practice, but communities of interest, geography, politics or faith. An activity system, representing shared norms, rules, symbolic artefacts and means of collaboration demonstrates the interconnectedness of members in enabling a community to form and develop, and at the same time demonstrates potential to create closure in excluding other individuals or systems.

Engeström's activity theory offered a means of explaining how individuals are enculturated into a profession-specific way of being, where behaviours adopted through explicit rules and tacit norms can create not only distinctions but also boundaries between professional practices. If the key elements of the activity system were applied, for example, to the GTCS, the 'subject' as members of the teaching profession, the 'object' of the organisation and its members, to maintain and promote standards of practice. The mediating tools to achieve this are the registration and CPD processes, carried out to ensure that professional standards and values are met. The code of conduct represents the rules of the system; the community in this case is the membership body, and division of labour is apparent in the structures within the organisation that correspond to different levels of responsibility. The activity system explains the interconnectedness of the responsibilities and processes of the professional body, although the structure of the 'community' is less clear. Where the community in this case could be described as registered members, it might be argued that professional organisations rely less on active participative membership, and more on an implementation of guidance and rules to practitioners.

A criticism of the cultural historical approach was that the position of the individual is generalised, and specific learning needs are undifferentiated in a particular cultural context (Philpott, 2014). In addition, Engeström's model of activity theory does not describe a process of ethical judgement, accepting that reference to shared norms and rules can represent ethical codes. In order to show expansive potential of contradiction between two systems, Engeström developed his ideas further as a communicative relationship between two models, shown in Figure 6, where the objects of each system co-create a third outcome, independent of either system, as an outcome represented by expansion.

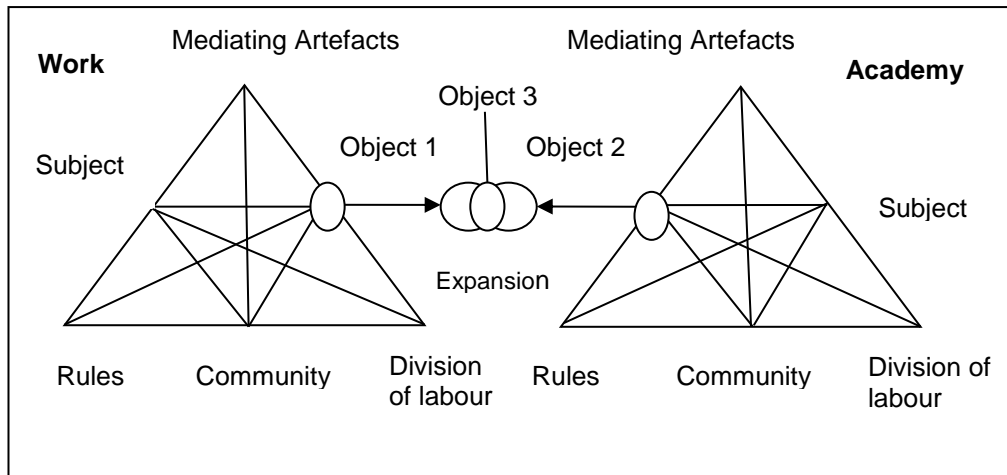


Figure 6 Interacting activity systems of work and academy (Engeström, 2009)

The relationship between activity systems in this model demonstrates the potential for connections and boundaries between learning communities of work and the academy. Engeström's (2009) idea was that through expansion, boundaries between systems may be crossed, but the essential nature of each system remains intact. This distinction helps to explain separations between communities of privilege or disadvantage, or in different faith-based or interest communities, where understanding and co-operation may be achieved between systems, but each system retains its symbolic and social boundaries (Lamont & Molnar, 2002). Engeström's ideas help to explain difficulties in interprofessional practice, where objective practices may be challenged and changed through collaborative working, but may be restricted by a need to maintain the activity systems of each profession. Interconnected activity systems can illustrate Bourdieu's (1986) idea of cultural capital, where the norms, artefacts and practices in a particular system can prevent adoption of the social norms or practices of another system. Of particular significance to continuing learning, the model illustrates boundaries for the workplace practitioner who potentially moves between three systems, of academic traditions and practices, workplace rules, norms and behaviours and professional codes of practice.

A drawback in Engeström's (2009) construct of interconnected activity systems is that it did not necessarily illustrate power structures or relationships of control between systems. In the relationships between work, academy and profession, it has been argued that universities dominate professions in terms of societal power (Eraut, 1994). From this premise,

professional learning needs may not be fully met by qualifications which are designed to first meet the requirements of an academic activity system. In the situation of workplace learning, the profession would have more power than workplace organisations. Relationships between local authorities, governments and professions might be dependent on scale, legislative responsibility and finance in determining power. For example, at the time of this study, education and community education in Scotland are located within Education Scotland as the Executive Agency of the Scottish Government with responsibility for improvement and support. Nursing is part of the UK wide NHS, and quality regulation and support for social work is incorporated in the SSSC as the professional agency for all social services. Nursing, education and community education each have membership agencies, described in section 1.8 of Chapter 1. In this way, each profession has its own constituency and membership framework, but with differing historical relationships and levels of support and control between the state and the profession. In that analysis, interconnection between professions would not have equal footing, in the same way that professions and universities have different cultural and historical levels of power in societies.

Engeström's (2009, 2012) ideas about interaction within and between activity systems were useful as a means of examining the activities and means of mediation within the three learning locations of work, study and profession, and contradictions as boundaries between the three contexts. The expansive learning aspect of Engeström's interaction between models was that where the object of the activity provided a source of ambiguity or contradiction, this would require negotiation and interpretation, presenting new outcomes of change. Engeström suggested that through 'horizontal interaction', participants in workplaces could collectively solve unique problems and in so doing, create new knowledge (Unwin, Felstead & Fuller, 2007). The interaction of subjects of the activity, Engeström suggested, presented potential for engagement with different perspectives, in which case contradictions could become opportunities for learning, not as transmission, but towards transformational change. He drew attention to the unpredictable and ongoing nature of learning in contexts of practice.

People and organisations are all the time learning something that is not stable, not even defined or understood ahead of time. In important transformations of our personal lives and organisational practices, we must learn new forms of activity which are not yet there. They are literally learned as they are being created.

(Engeström, 1987a:78)

In this respect, recognised that the challenge for learning is not towards maintenance of stability, but to be able to use contradiction as a basis for determining more effective ways of working within an ongoing process of change. In developing the concept of contradiction as a necessary factor for expansive learning, Engeström (1987a; 2001) drew from Bateson's (1972) ideas about developmental learning, and this is discussed in the next section.

#### 4.3 Developmental learning

A third theoretical construct which underpins professional learning and which contributed to Engeström's ideas is Bateson's (1972) developmental levels of learning, outlined in Table 4.

Level 0	Reflex; stimulus – response
Level 1	Conditioned learning, comprising Levels 1a and b
Level 1a	Assimilation: adopted as corresponding to existing knowledge;
Level 1b	Accommodation: interpretation and adaptation of existing knowledge
Level 2	Surfacing tacit contradictions in 1a and 1b; awareness of influences of socio-cultural context
Level 3	Critical questioning of context, leading to transformation

Table 4 Levels of learning (adapted from Bateson, 1972)

Bateson (1972) proposed four levels of learning: zero learning followed by Levels I, II and III, summarised in Table 4. Zero learning was so termed as it involves reflex action and no learner choice is involved; in Table 4, this level is termed 'reflex'. In Bateson's construct, Level I involved conditioned learning, where ideas are assimilated or linked to existing knowledge and understanding, and accommodated, or accepted with interpretation and adaptation of existing knowledge and understanding, at Levels 1a and 1b respectively. Bateson linked Levels 1a and 1b learning to Piaget's (1929, 1978) cognitive adaptation ideas of assimilation and accommodation, where in Level 1a, the learner assimilated new ideas

with existing understanding without difficulty. New or unfamiliar ideas, as Level Ib learning, required to be more carefully considered and adapted to existing knowledge, before becoming accommodated as habitual skills and knowledge. Piaget (1978) proposed a third stage of 'equilibrium' as a combination of assimilated and accommodated ideas, and a further state of 'disequilibrium' where anomalies in experience occurred. Similarly, in Bateson's work, a key aspect of Level II learning was the surfacing of a double bind of contradiction between conditioned responses and awareness of a 'hidden curriculum' determined through tacit learning at Level I. In the latter stage, what is a correct answer at Level I might be influenced by socio-cultural influences of the learning context; in other words, a response may be technically accurate but not necessarily aligned with a particular socio-cultural context. As Greenwood (1993:1052) succinctly explained, 'a technical rational approach to practice may lead to the correct performance of inappropriate actions'.

Awareness of this contradiction between Levels I and II, Bateson argued, would lead to Level III learning, in critical questioning of the context itself. Level III then represents transformative learning as a new awareness, a change in consciousness or enlightenment. Freire (1970) termed this *conscientisation*, from the Portuguese *conscientização*, as a process of consciousness-raising, or development of critical consciousness, which informed action towards praxis. Mezirow's (2000) concept of transformative learning, where new awareness is the outcome of critical inquiry relates to this third level of learning. Habermas's (1971) construct of technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge-constitutive interests, in which he proposed three different purposes, forms and applications of knowledge, might be compared with Bateson's (1972) Levels I as a technical accommodation and assimilation of knowledge; II as an interpretative application of knowledge and III, knowledge as critical transformation.

Bateson explained that in a first level of learning, through the experience of being in a particular context, information is acquired about the environment, about actions and practices within that setting and about perceived right or wrong ways of behaving. In a different learning environment, some of the learning from the first context will remain, and new aspects will be added. 'Some of the items of the first experiment will be repeated or

affirmed, some will be contradicted' (1972:509). In relation to ecological growth, those items that were selected would survive; those not selected would not survive. Bateson argued that in the growth of mind, ideas that survived repeated use were separated out from new ideas, and contributed to habit formation. In this way, Bateson suggested that a set of tried and trusted ideas could be drawn upon without undue reflection, whereas new ideas required more flexible consideration.

In Bateson's Level II learning, the frequency of use of knowledge, behaviour or judgement in a given context become a necessary factor in a practitioner's repertoire of knowledge and behaviour. He explained that more generalised ideas survived repeated use and became accepted 'hard-programmed' premises, on which subsequent norms, beliefs and behaviours were founded. Bateson saw these latter key premises as relatively inflexible and hard to change. In professional practice, this might help to explain why habitual practice in, say, one context only, without experience or challenge of different contexts for learning, might lead to reinforced 'stuck in a rut' behaviours, which can be difficult to change. For professional learning, if a practitioner has only had experience of one environment, or has worked in the same setting for an extended period, this idea proposes that experience of a different setting might challenge habitual patterns of behaviour.

Based on his initial outline of an evolutionary process in selection, Bateson (1972) argued that these premises would become 'nodal' or 'nuclear', in the continued selection and habit formation of ideas that survived repeated use. Bateson explained that because an idea was selected for survival, this validated neither its truth nor usefulness. For example, writing in 1972, Bateson warned about the role of new technologies in advancing habitually accepted paradigms as if they were 'true'. In other words, because a system is more accessible, or because ideas can be more widely distributed, does not necessarily make them reliable or beneficial, as Bateson explained.

Frequency of validation of an idea within a given segment of time is not the same as proof that the idea is either true or pragmatically useful over a long period of time.

We are discovering today that several of the premises which are deeply ingrained in



our way of life are simply untrue and become pathogenic when implemented with modern technology. (Bateson, 1972: 510)

Bateson's explanation of ecological evolution of ideas involved a process of 'economy of flexibility', first in the initial groupings of repeated ideas to allow flexibility in processing new ideas, and second in the wider selective clustering of abstract premises in relation to other systems or networks of ideas (Bateson used the term 'constellations'). He explained that to achieve flexibility, a system needs to have a central positioning of possible selections: 'the overall flexibility of a system depends of upon keeping many of its variables in the middle of their tolerable limits' (ibid). However, a contradiction to this situation can exist where regenerative subsystems may encroach on a static central variable and reduce its freedom or potential for change.

If a given variable remains too long in some middle value, other variables may encroach on its freedom, narrowing the tolerance limits until its freedom to move is zero, or more precisely, until any future movement can only be achieved at the price of disturbing the encroaching variables. ... it follows that to maintain the flexibility of a given variable, either that flexibility must be exercised or the encroaching variables must be directly controlled.

(Bateson, 1972:511)

Bateson discussed the application of these ideas in society, where if something is determined to be static or not exercising its flexibility, there can be a possibility of other variables encroaching on this area of 'unused freedom'. Moreover, Bateson explained that there can be a tendency for 'encroaching variables' to create controlling rules which may then restrict flexibility. In the case of professional learning, if practitioners do not extend flexibilities through learning towards change, then 'encroaching variables' of organisational managerialism may move into a position of control, restricting both learning and change. Reinforcing the evolutionary need for continual adaptability, he quoted a Zen master in seeing the process of change as positive and inevitable: 'to become accustomed to anything is a terrible thing' (Bateson, 1972:511). Bateson's ideas respond to the idea of dialectic, discussed earlier in relation to contradiction. His ideas seem to correspond to the possibilities of learning through 'contradictions and conflicts' or the 'breaks in continuity'

proposed in this quotation from Lenin (1980) which describes and explains dialectics as development of 'leaps, catastrophes and revolutions' in a spiralling as opposed to a linear motion.

A development that repeats, as it were, stages that have already been passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher basis...a development, so to speak, that proceeds in spirals, not in a straight line; a development by leaps, catastrophes, and revolutions; "breaks in continuity"; the transformation of quantity into quality; inner impulses towards development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society; the interdependence and the closest and indissoluble connection between all aspects of any phenomenon (history constantly revealing ever new aspects), a connection that provides a uniform, and universal process of motion, one that follows definite laws - these are some of the features of dialectics as a doctrine of development that is richer than the conventional one.

(Lenin, 1980:7-9)

Bateson's (1972) levels of learning underpin Argyris and Schön's (1974:19) suggested models of single- or double-loop learning, which they explain as either reproducing or contesting the norms in a situation: 'in single-loop learning, we learn to maintain the field of constancy by learning to design actions that satisfy existing governing variables. In double-loop learning we learn to change the field of constancy itself'. In this comparison, Argyris and Schön proposed that single-loop learning (as Bateson's Level Ia and Ib) led to changes within existing variables, whereas double-loop learning (Level II) acted as a critical analysis of the variables towards (Level III) change in the determinants of the context. Engeström's ideas of contradiction as central to expansive learning were also informed by Bateson where he had noted that Bateson's Level III learning points were 'turning points' or moments of revelation', and new awareness was the outcome of critical inquiry (Engeström, 1987a:153). As the process of contradiction was central to both Engeström's and Bateson's ideas, interpretations of this term are discussed in the next section.

#### 4.4 Contradiction

Engeström used the term contradiction to describe challenges or tensions that developed over time either within specific systems or across contexts, explaining contradictions as 'historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems' (2009:57). For other authors, the term 'contradiction' has more specific meanings, from an everyday interpretation of opposing arguments, to philosophical and Marxist concepts of dialectic methods of argument. To understand the significance of this term, some interpretations are examined in this section. Edgar & Sedgewick (1999:89) suggested that in societal relationships, the concept of contradiction arose from individuals pursuing particular purposes, resulting in one person's aims not being commensurate with those of another, or from their interests being incompatible, for example differing views in relation to political, religious or cultural affiliations. In social contexts, the notion of contradiction was defined by Giddens (1979:131) as 'disjunction of structural principles of system organisation', in contrast to relationships of conflict as 'struggle between actors or collectivities expressed as definite social practices'. Giddens' position was to consider not the functionality of social practices, rather, what contradictions they may represent. Giddens (1979:89) proposed that the principle of contradiction in logic concerns a situation where 'two mutually exclusive states of affairs cannot simultaneously be asserted to be the case, ie it is impossible for something to exist and at the same time not exist'. The construction of valid arguments stemmed from this principle, in that if proposition (p) makes an assertion (f) which is denied by another proposition (q), then the two propositions (p) and (q) are said to be in contradiction. The truth of one (q) negates the truth of the other (p). This principle underpins the concept of dialectics.

In classic Greek philosophy, the term 'dialectic' was used to denote a form of logical reasoning, which presented a dialogue of thesis and antithesis, with synthesis of rational arguments and counterarguments in a search for truth. The purpose of the dialectic approach was to determine the main premises presented in an argument and through questioning, to establish any contradictions, flaws or inconsistencies in the argument. The aim of dialectic was not only to test the validity of a hypothesis, by determining

counterarguments but also to strengthen the participants' abilities to think, discuss and argue. In German philosophy, Fichte proposed dialectics as characterized by thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Contradiction in this sense between thesis and antithesis would be resolved by a 'leap' to a different way of looking at the problem, 'so that the initial contradiction is explained away by recognising the limits upon one's reasoning and knowledge and their taken for granted presuppositions placed upon the original argument' (Fichte, cited in Giddens, 1979:113).

The term was given different ontological interpretations in the work of Hegel (1770-1831) and Marx (1818-1883), where Hegel was concerned with the integration of thought and being as unified. From a monist ontological perspective Hegel's view of absolute idealism was that progress stems from the development over time of increasingly complex forms, which present diversity and multiple means of interpreting and making sense of the world (Giddens, 1979). Giddens argued that Hegel recognised contradiction as a fundamental principle of existence, which was realised through a dialectic process. Drawing from, but refuting Hegel's ideas, Marx believed that the material world took precedence over thought. In materialism, all matter is considered as interconnected, interdependent and in continual motion; thought is a means whereby the brain reflects material existence. For Marx, dialectic materialism formed a core idea of his 1867 treatise, 'Das Kapital'. Class struggle formed out of contradictions between wealth and poverty, individual and collective material gain and acquisition, profit and loss presented multiple contradictions in societies, which Marx argued, arose from division of labour.

The division of labour results in concentration, co-ordination, co-operation, antagonism of private interests and class interests, competition, the centralisation of capital, monopolies and joint stock companies – so many contradictory forms of unity which in turn engenders all these contradictions.

(Marx, cited in Giddens 1979:138)

The implications of a Marxist perspective are that contradictions, stemming from division of labour and consequent hierarchical and competitive interests, underpin socio-economic, cultural and class divisions within societies. This helps to explain contradiction as a core

concept in addressing concerns of collaboration between learning contexts and at the same time reinforces the potential for ways in which education, in this case in the form of continuing professional learning, can address boundary crossing between societal divisions, as well as occupational or contextual separations.

Although contradiction is core to both Bateson's (1972) emergent and Engeström's (1987a, 2009) expansive learning processes, ways in which ethical judgements are made for social good are not sufficiently explained in either set of theories. The dialectic position of contradiction was implicit rather than explicit in Vygotsky's processes of mediated, socially constructed, and development learning. If contradiction is an essential element of learning, ways in which normative behaviours are created and actioned would depend on expanding abilities to critically determine and debate dilemmas of ethical practice. To explore the ways in which learning to make ethical judgements is developed by professionals on behalf of society; the next section considers characteristics and processes of ethical learning.

#### 4.5 Ethical learning

The fourth set of ideas in this chapter concerns ethical learning. If a key part of being professional involves ethical work on behalf of society, then a significant aspect of continuing learning relates to ways in which ethical judgement and moral approaches are learned towards practice for public good. In western societies, three main sets of beliefs about ethics predominate: Aristotle's virtue ethics, Kant's deontological ethics and Bentham's utilitarian principle. Aristotle's (384-322 BC) view of ethics was that virtues of justice, altruism and equality were dispositions that benefited both the individual and their society. Kant's (1724-1804) deontological ethics concerned the idea that duty is central to moral behaviour, and that human beings have an imperative to respect all sentient beings. A third form of ethics was Bentham's (1748-1832) idea of utilitarianism, later supported by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). This was guided by the principle of ensuring benefit for the majority, outlined in the maxim of 'the greatest good for the greatest number'. In relation to contemporary UK social work, Banks (2014: 5) described ethics as broadly concerning key aspects of 'conduct, character, relationships and the good society'. Banks asserted that these factors tended to focus on both deontological duty and 'greatest good' responsibilities, with an increasing

contemporary interest in virtue ethics as moral agency. Aristotle's virtue ethics were selected as underpinning the ethical interests of the study, as related to principles of 'social justice, equality and inclusion' adopted by Scottish Government (2007, 2010a). Next, Aristotle's concept of *phronēsis* (Flyvbjerg, 2001) is discussed.

#### 4.5.1 Aristotle's concept of *phronēsis*

In Greek philosophy, Aristotle (384-322 BC) argued that well-being is the goal of humanity and for individuals to achieve this, development of moral character, as a combination of knowledge, experience and ethical judgement is required. Flyvbjerg (2001:57) explained that Aristotle used the term *technē* to describe skill, craft or 'know how', *epistēmē* as scientific, universal knowledge or 'know why', and *phronēsis* to identify moral understanding of knowing the right thing to do, in the right way, at the right time. *Phronēsis* has been translated as prudence, sagacity, ethical judgement, or practical wisdom; the latter gaining ground as a term used in professional learning. Flyvbjerg (2001:57) described *phronēsis* as 'deliberation about values with reference to praxis; pragmatic, variable, context dependent; oriented towards action; based on practical value rationality'. He considered *phronēsis* to be concerned with ethics as opposed to scientific knowledge or technical skills. Flyvbjerg's view of *phronēsis* as context dependent links to Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective, and the intention of ethical deliberation towards action, referred to as *praxis*. Flyvbjerg explained that in contrast to Foucault's concern about ethics of the self, Aristotle was concerned with ethics in relation to society.

Foucault...talks about aesthetics of existence', that is, the relationship you have with yourself when you act. Aristotle, in discussing *phronēsis*, is mainly talking about ethics in relation to social and political praxis, that is, the relationship you have with society when you act.

(Flyvbjerg 2001:55)

In this sense, if professions have a pact with society to deliver specialist services and in doing so, maintain levels and standards of quality, it follows that an understanding of the ways in which ethics are perceived, shaped and learned within contexts of professional practice is an essential factor of that process. Yet it seems that ethics play a restricted role in

continuing professional learning. Banks (2014) indicated an expanding interest in UK social work ethics from the 1990s, but argued a tendency towards codes of practice and regulation of conduct, in response to influences of neoliberalism and organisational managerialism in public service professions. This process, Banks (2014) argued, had increasingly taken precedence over to a moral agency perspective of ethical practice towards social justice and in opposition to discrimination and disadvantage.

From their research with medical students, Monrouxe et al. (2011) considered that individual and collective discourses of professionalism did not encompass the complexity of 'wise application' proposed by Arnold and Stern (2006). The latter authors viewed wise application to emerge over time through competent practice and effective communication, set within ethical and legal procedures. As a professional aspiration, wise application became the pinnacle of 'excellence, humanism, accountability and altruism' (ibid, 2006). Hilton and Snotlick (2005) presented a similar emphasis on ethical practice as a context of professionalism in medicine. The authors made particular reference to practical wisdom or *phronēsis* as a central feature of the 'mature professional', who knows 'which rules to break and how far to break them' in response to complex situations. Monrouxe et al. suggested that this level of insightful judgement could be achieved only through significant and accumulated experience in dealing with 'paradox, complexity and uncertainty' (2011:527). In this respect, *phronēsis* necessitates development through experience over time, with opportunities to make deliberative ethical judgements, both individually and collectively, about complex matters of the 'greatest human concern' (Schön, 1987:3).

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Cahn, 1990) described the process whereby *phronēsis* could be achieved through experience, artistry, teaching others, mastery and deliberation. First, Aristotle suggested that skills learned through experience were more valuable than theoretical knowledge as theory, but the combination of both, termed 'artistry', had even more value. Artistry, Aristotle argued, presented the ability to teach others: 'knowing the cause of things, artists can teach, and men of mere experience cannot'. Repeated practice of artistry would then lead to a stage of 'mastery' which both enabled and was enhanced by the experience of teaching others. Beyond mastery, Aristotle suggested the highest

aspiration of learning to be *phronēsis* or practical wisdom. He believed that the *phronimos*, or person of practical wisdom (Ross & Brown, 2009) developed this state through mastery derived from an ability to determine what is good, to deliberate and act on deliberation, with intention towards societal well-being. By repeating this approach in a range of situations, habit would be formed and through habit, disposition. Aristotle suggested that virtues such as loyalty, generosity, trust and courage were learned through interaction with others and that this contributed to a virtuous disposition, formed through the habit of experience and by deliberation towards a common good. Knowing the right approach to take, Aristotle argued, came from deliberation based on these intentions, which in professional practice might be interpreted as professional judgement or ethical decision-making. Deliberation has similarities to reflection as a means of experiential learning (Schön, 1983; Kolb, 1984) with a key difference that deliberation involves deciding the right way to act, for the right outcome. Rather than Schön's idea of reflection-on-action as learning from past experience, Aristotle explained deliberation as decision-making for future action and asserted that 'we do not decide to do what is already past'. He stressed the importance of collective decision-making in the proposal that where a problem was too great for individual resolution about a course of action, deliberation through dialogue and debate with others would be necessary.

Deliberation concerns what is usually one way rather than another, where the outcome is unclear and the right way to act is undefined. And we enlist partners in deliberation on large issues when we distrust our own ability to discern the right answer.

(Aristotle, cited in Cahn, 1990:246)

In Schön's (1983) idea of reflection-in-action, a decision is being taken 'in the moment' of what action is appropriate to the situation. Eraut (1994) suggested that Schön's ideas of reflection-in-action represent meta-cognition, as 'thinking about thinking' rather than reflection as deliberation, which from Aristotle's idea, was making an informed decision about action. Where reflection on and in practice may be useful in the identification, interpretation and implications of action, as in Bateson's (1972) Level I selection, or Level II critical interpretation of practice, a further stage of deliberation would be required for qualified practitioners to take



action towards development, as in Bateson's Level III stage. This third stage of taking action is important in considering how ethical practice is learned.

In considering ethical learning processes in professions, necessary factors seem to include Aristotle's ideas of the virtuous disposition, based on virtues such as loyalty, generosity and trust, formed through interaction with others, and of deliberation towards a common good. Smith (1999, 2011) outlined Aristotle's idea of *phronēsis* as practical judgement stemming from 'a human disposition towards well doing as an end in itself', leading to *praxis* as the active outcome of *phronēsis*. Smith followed the idea that *phronēsis* is a deliberative process towards common good, resulting from interpretation, understanding and judgement over time and resulting in *praxis* as the enacted outcome.

Winch (1998:36) agreed with the Aristotelian perspective that 'inculcation of habit' is necessary for moral learning. Moral development for Winch concerned ideas of empathy, moral judgment and altruism, which he argued impacted on professional behaviours. Winch saw similarities between learning morality and apprenticeship to a craft, not as acquiring techniques or expertise, but as expansion of experience: 'an extension of repertoires, to cover new and complex situations, embodying wisdom of colleagues and other practitioners in wider social world', thus situating action and self-realisation. In ethical learning as both an individual and collective process, MacIntyre (1985) argued the appropriateness of Aristotle's view of ethics to contemporary life. He suggested that the most useful way to approach ethics in modern life was through Socrates' idea of narratives 'writ small' as individual interpretations of wider narratives which had been 'writ large' through historical formation of cultures (MacIntyre, cited in Vardy and Grosch, 1994). MacIntyre explained a central thesis of ethics was that humans as 'story-telling animals', had become 'tellers of stories that aspire to truth'. The ways in which this process was learned was that beliefs formed within practices became habitual traditions adopted by societal structures, which in turn sustained the belief of individuals.

Beliefs are held and intentions and intelligible actions all take place within specific practices. These in turn develop traditions and become established in social institutions. Such practices enable the good for ourselves and the good for others to

be realised. It is a symbiotic relationship: the virtues sustain the practices and the practices sustain the virtues.

(Vardy and Grosch, 1994:105)

In this account, 'small stories' as individual narratives of personal experience contribute to 'big stories' (Bamberg, 2006) of professional contributions to society, and vice-versa. This interpretation of the significance of ethics to professional learning resonates with the research approach that is described in Chapter 5, where an interpretative research design explained connections between individual experiences in relation to wider socio-cultural perspectives.

Gardener et al. (2001) questioned what factors are necessary for people to address ethical challenges and dilemmas of contemporary professional practice, and in contexts of societal and economic change, achieve not only competent practice, but 'good' practice. The authors suggested that 'if the fundamentals of good work – excellence and ethics – are in harmony, we lead a personally fulfilling and socially rewarding life' (2001:16). They agreed with the idea that becoming professional involves striking a bargain between the community of need and the services provided in societies. On the basis of these arguments, being an expert professional means not only knowing the right thing to do, but knowing how to identify needs in particular contexts. In this respect, identification and analysis of needs becomes a necessary factor for professional learning. To achieve good professional practice, Gardener and his colleagues suggested 'alignment' in a social matrix of practitioners, domains, fields of practice and other stakeholders. Where practitioners are able to experience 'flow' across the matrix between individual roles, the practice domain and relationships with stakeholders, alignment results. If, on the other hand, dysfunction emerges through 'anomie' – where no one knows the right thing to do – or 'alienation', where rules and regulations are restrictive to an extent that practitioners do not wish to carry out the instructions of work, then cultural norms are disrupted to an extent that good practice cannot prevail (Gardener et al., 2001:10). Gardener and colleagues proposed that organisational planning and principles for societal good could deter anomie or alienation, through 'mission, standards and identity' (2001:10). The terminology might be problematic however; where 'mission' is interpreted as concern for social benefit, standards might be seen as measures of control rather than as

principles and instead of deterring anomie, could have an adverse effect of fostering alienation.

#### 4.5.2 Contemporary models of ethical learning

In this section, a series models of learning help to explain ways in which ethical practice can be learned in professions. First as a means of examining ways in which people develop cultural norms from a range of sources, Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1994) ideas of ecological development shown in Figure 7 help to explain the formation of values through home, school, communities of interest, faith or geography, and through networks and interactions between the different systems. Bronfenbrenner proposed a series of systems that helped to explain communicative relationships between people from a perspective of self and others.

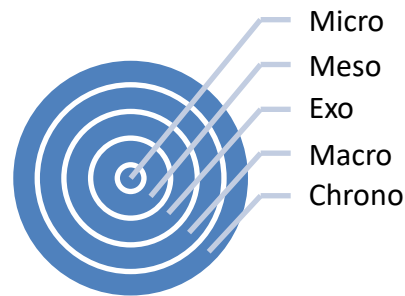


Figure 7 Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Ecological model of human development

At the core, a microsystem represented immediate interaction, for example with family, friends, peers and workplace. The meso system linked two or more microsystems, for example, work and home. In the exosystem, links between two or more settings were proposed, at least one of which did not involve the individual, but presented influence. The macrosystem represented a pattern of links between micro, meso and exosystems, which contributed to the formation of culture. Bronfenbrenner's chronosystem represented either change or consistency over time for the individual as socio-economic or environmental change, brought about by change in age, location or employment. In this model, the learner is the centre of a series of systems, where the micro level represents localised situations of home and work, and the macro system, relationships between work, home and study. The exosystem might represent links between profession, work, study and home, where profession influences the individual without their direct involvement. The mesosystem is

represented as socio-cultural communication formed through links across other settings, and in this case, the chronosystem concerns the development of learning over time, in different contexts or locations.

In each of these systems and through their interconnections, learning about ways of behaving professionally may be formed. In terms of learning, contextual locations may be integrated, or occur as separate cultural spaces and identities. If the demands of one area unduly encroach on another, this could create tensions of imbalance, for example, if work or study imposed disproportionately on home life. As a model of human development, Bronfenbrenner's systems are useful in determining the influences of communicative interactions in formation of cultural ideas and beliefs. Where professional practitioners might see their personal value system as fundamental to Weber's (1905) idea of a 'vocation' or calling, towards their chosen profession, Bronfenbrenner's model suggests that norms and values are socially constructed through networks of learning communities. In this model, ideas of 'common good' and the altruistic contribution of professional practice to society, reflected in professional codes, are formed and reformed through complex and integrated lived experiences of participants.

To consider ways in which ethical practice can be developed specifically in relation to a work context, Dreyfus and Dreyfus's (1986) model of skills acquisition is discussed next.

In a model which relates to learning through work, Dreyfus and Dreyfus's (1986) developmental framework suggested that levels of learner achievement in practice situations progressed from 'novice, beginner, competent and proficient to expert'. Resulting from Flyvbjerg's (2001) criticism that the model did not sufficiently account for experienced and reflective judgement in the levels of 'expert', Dreyfus (2001) later added levels of mastery and practical wisdom to the original model. Explaining necessary factors to achieve mastery, Dreyfus stressed a requirement of apprenticeship not only in single, but also in multiple master-apprentice situations. His argument was that modelling their work on a series of experienced practitioners would enable the learner to observe and learn from a range of different skill sets and consequently develop their own individual style. As an example, a musician might learn the foundation skills in playing an instrument with one tutor, then

benefit from a range of master classes in developing their own expertise. The highest stage of practical wisdom for Dreyfus was the development of cultural and moral awareness through interaction and collaboration with others, which resonated with MacIntyre's (1985) idea of ethical learning formed in a symbiotic exchange between the individual and collective association. Dreyfus (2001) argued particularly for 'presence' as a necessary factor for tacit learning in developing practical wisdom, through real-world practice contexts involving physical presence and dialogue, rather than through virtual online learning environments which might omit or obscure aspects of tacit communication.

Thinking about how practitioners can develop ethical decision-making in accordance with professional principles and values, Kohlberg's (1986) model of moral development proposed staged progression from rule-dependency to self-efficacy in selecting ethical principles, detailed in Table 5.

Level 1 Pre- Conventional	Stage 1	Heteronomous morality	Sticks to the rules
	Stage 2	Individualism/ Instrumentalism	Aware of other's interests
Level 2 Conventional	Stage 3	Mutual interpersonal	Lives up to expectations of others in order to be seen as good; can then have self-regard as good
	Stage 4	Social system and conscience	Fulfills social duties in order to keep social system going
Level 3 Post- Conventional	Stage 5	Social contract	Upholds relative rules in interest of impartial welfare for all
	Stage 6	Universal ethical principles	Follows self-selected ethical principles, even when these conflict with laws

Table 5 Kohlberg's (1986:34-35) model of moral development

In Kohlberg's model, the learner moved from pre-conventional stage of obeying rules, then becoming aware of difference. This was followed by a conventional stage of fulfilling self and social regard, and to a post-conventional stage of following rules towards social welfare. In this model, pre-conventional and conventional stages are similar to Bateson's (1972) Levels I and II, discussed in section 4.4, where knowledge is first assimilated, then critically reviewed in order to surface contradictions. Kohlberg's final stage followed a universal ethical principle where the practitioner self-determines ethical principles, even where these are at odds to rules, which corresponds with Bateson's Level III position of change.

Kohlberg's conventional stage could be compared to learning within an activity system Engeström's (2009) that represents the influences of a social structure on ways in which practitioners recognise and exercise ethical practice.

King and Kitchener's (1994:44-74) model of reflective judgement, outlined in Table 6, has some similarities to Kohlberg's ideas. The authors proposed a seven-stage progression of assumptions about knowledge, from a position where acquired knowledge is believed as true, to a position where knowledge is assumed to be subject to interpretation, and solutions could be formed through critical reflective inquiry.

Stage	Development	Assumptions about knowledge
1	Observed	What is observed is considered to be true and justification is not required – all problems have true responses.
2	Received	Knowledge held by those in authority is true. Task for individual is to determine which authorities to believe.
3	Justified	Assumption that while ultimately all knowledge can be validated, some problems are presently unsolvable and solutions are justifiable on basis of personal feelings or understanding.
4	Abstracted	Individuals recognise uncertainty of knowledge and are sceptical of role of authority figure in determining what is true.
5	Contextual	Assumption that knowledge must be considered within a context to achieve interpretation relative to particular circumstances.
6	Reasoned	Knowing involves arguments, evaluation, comparison of evidence and opinions.
7	Reflective Judgement	Recognition that although knowledge is subject to interpretation and uncertainty, critical reflective inquiry can construct reasoned solutions.

Table 6 Stages of reflective judgement (adapted from King and Kitchener, 1994)

King and Kitchener's initial three stages corresponded to Kohlberg's pre-conventional stage, and the next three represented an awareness of contradictory perspectives, comparative to Kohlberg's sixth stage. In the seventh stage, the authors' idea of reflective judgement might be compared to Aristotle's idea of deliberation for ethical practice. Both Kohlberg's (1986) and King and Kitchener's (1994) stages were useful in explaining individual and interpersonal processes of moral learning as contextually socially constructed, related to expectations of others, and responding to social duties or those in authority. However, ways in which ethical attributes might be actively developed through participative interaction were

not sufficiently clarified in either model. To address this problem, two theoretical constructs based on a social constructivist paradigm are considered. First, Cottone's (2001) idea that ethical dilemmas are solved through socially constructed reference points of more experienced colleagues, together with theories about ethical practice and contextual professional codes and principles of good practice. Second, Durkheim's (1958) argument that professional ethics are grounded in socially constructed contexts of collaborative association is considered.

Cottone (2001:40) argued that ethical learning models tended towards the individual decision maker as a 'psychological entity', rather than as a constituent part of a socially constructed relational process. Individualised reasoning, cited by Kitchener (1984) as 'intuitive' or 'critical evaluative', was insufficient for Cottone without the interpersonal relationships with others, or without the mediating artefacts created by others. Rather than learning to make ethical decisions as an individual, Cottone drew from Gergen's (1985:271) view that in relational ethics: 'the mind becomes a form of social myth; the self-concept is removed from the head and placed within the sphere of social discourse'. From this idea, Cottone asserted that 'decisions cannot be located 'in' the individual'. Rather, they are in the social matrix (ibid). Cottone's proposal was that a socially constructed mode of ethical decision-making involved interpersonal processes of negotiating, consensualizing and arbitrating. He offered a staged process which involved i) acquiring information from those involved, ii) assessing relationships within the context, iii) consulting expert opinion, ie from other professionals, ethics codes and literature, iv) negotiating any disagreements, and v) responding in a consensual way within the context.

Cottone set out these steps in a diagram, shown in Figure 8, which showed the stages of acquiring information, assessing the situation and consultation as preliminary to both stages of negotiation and consensus. If an ethical decision based on consensus failed, a further stage, which Cottone termed 'interactive reflection' would consider if aspects of negotiation might be modified and readdressed, or if arbitration was necessary. In this case, interactive reflection involved 'a process of conversation with trusted individuals to come to

agreement as to whether arbitration should be sought or whether a position needs to be modified to re-enter negotiation' (Cottone, 2001:43).

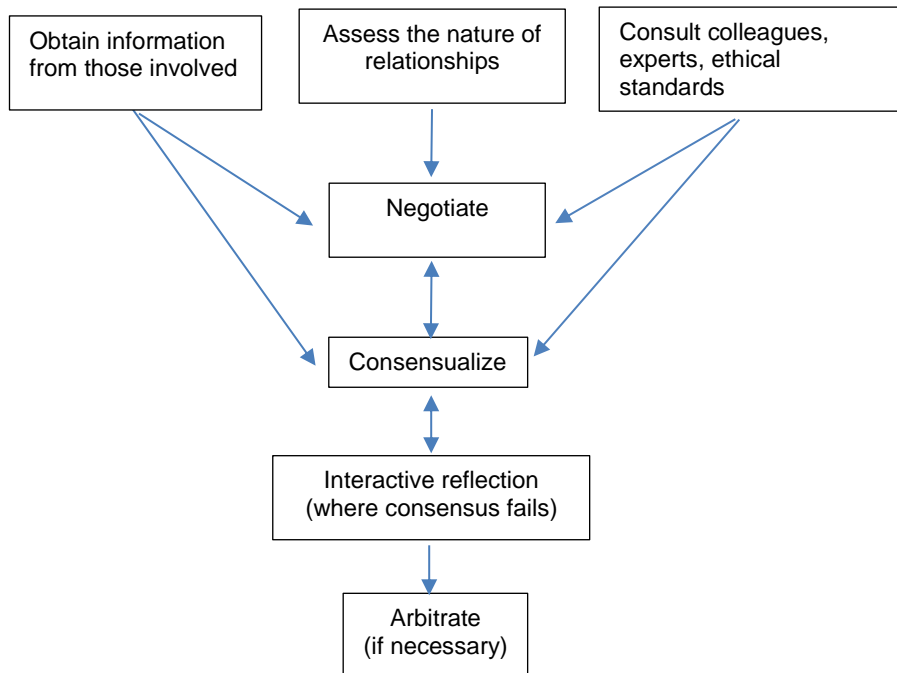


Figure 8 Cottone (2001:43) Social construction of outcome to ethical dilemma

What was particularly useful about Cottone's model was that the idea of contradiction, discussed in section 4.4, was reintroduced in two ways. In resolving an ethical dilemma and in order to determine the right course, debate and constructive argument about other courses of action are necessary, and in Cottone's proposal of alternative and potentially contradictory strategies, the idea of dialectic was central. Second, a socially constructed resolution to a dilemma involves proposed consensual future action based on informed and negotiated consideration of past experiences and present circumstances of participants. In Cottone's processes of acquisition, assessment, consultation, negotiation and consensus, it was possible to recognise similarities to Bateson's (1972) stages of accommodation, assimilation, selection, contradiction, critical challenge and transformation. From these two sets of ideas, for ethical judgement to take place, knowledge as information about the social situation and its participants must first be acquired, accommodated and assimilated. Then, selective processing and interpretation of the specific context contribute to assessment of the situation; critical analysis of contradictory circumstances lead to negotiation and



Cottone's (2001) subsequent stage of consensualism, or in Bateson's construct, Level III, as a step further to transformation. Cottone's (2001) concept of professional ethics as socially constructed endorsed Gergen's (1991:168-169) suggestion that individuals were representative of a wider, collective authority in decision-making: 'when individuals declare right and wrong in a given situation they are only acting as local representatives for larger relationships in which they are enmeshed. Their relationships speak through them'. For these authors, learning to make ethical decisions in professions was dependant on interpersonal relationships.

From an earlier perspective, Durkheim's (1958) argued that collectivity was a core principle of ethical behaviour in professions. Durkheim proposed that a 'fundamental condition' of professional ethics was the collective nature of professions and the cohesive inter-relationships of their membership. Without collective power, Durkheim explained, individuals would be left to their own devices and freed from moral constraint. He explained societal morality as devolved to professions as special groups within society whose business it was to bring together all those concerned with a particular area of work and ensure that a common morality underpinned social relationships within that group on behalf of society. Professions would then build moral structures by occupation and geography, and the strength of group cohesion and interaction between members would determine the breadth of ethical concern and level of authority. The closer and more frequent the contact of individuals, Durkheim argued, the more exchange of ideas and of 'sentiments', the more morally authoritative professions would become. Collective power, Durkheim stressed, was fundamental to professional morality.

A system of morals is always the affair of a group and can operate only if this group protects them by its authority. It is made up of rules that govern individuals, which compel them to act in such and such a way, and which impose limits on their inclinations and forbid them to go beyond. Now there is only one moral power...which stands above the individual and which can legitimately make laws for him and that is collective power.

(Durkheim, 1958:6-7)

In Durkheim's argument, professions formed by 'bringing together individuals of the same profession or professional groups', had responsibility for ensuring moral regulation, and as such had 'comparative autonomy, since each alone is competent to deal with the relations it is appointed to regulate' (1958:7). In this way, Durkheim argued that moral responsibility was decentralised and in societies, moral life was distinct and the differentiation in function amounts to a kind of 'moral polymorphism' (ibid). Where professions were stable, interactive and well-organised, Durkheim saw that ethics would be correspondingly effective; where organisations lacked stability or collective integration, ethical authority would be less effective. An argument of relevance to contemporary challenges of organisational managerialism was Durkheim's view that in the business professions, 'no professional ethics exist' (Durkheim, 1958:9). In this case, Durkheim argued that professional ethics were restricted by a lack of collective organisation for societal good across private sector commercial enterprises, and by consequent limited interest of private enterprise in determining or upholding collective profession-specific moral responsibilities. Adam Smith's eighteenth century concern about mutual sympathy as a balance to productivity recognised this tension, which is of increasing importance to twenty-first century professions as they endeavour to maintain core integrities while competing for resources and sustainability in global markets. Durkheim's arguments about the fundamental condition of collectivity in forming and upholding professional ethics were significant in thinking about how ethical practice is socially learned and constructed. Reference to sets of models and ideas of ethical learning has helped to determine theories of ethical development as constructivist, interpretive and participative. These ideas have resonance for continuing professional learning as a mediated, socially contextualised and developmental process, following the theories of Vygotsky (1978), Engeström (2001) and Bateson (1972) which formed the basis of this chapter. In the next chapter, the research methodology is presented. The selection of constructivist and interpretative ontological and epistemological perspectives are explained, together with techniques selected for collecting and analysing empirical data.

## Chapter 5 Methodology

Vygotsky suggested that selection of method is core to research design.

The search for method becomes one of the most important problems of the entire enterprise of understanding the uniquely human forms of psychological activity. In this case, the method is simultaneously prerequisite and product, the tool and the result of the study.

(Vygotsky, 1978:65)

Arguing against a reductionist approach, Vygotsky emphasised a developmental, dialectical process in research (Daniels, 2008:32-33). This view relates to the socially constructed and developmental learning theories discussed in the previous chapter, which underpin the research rationale and strategy for empirical data collection and analysis in the study.

In this chapter, sections 5.1 to 5.3 present a rationale for selection of methodology and methods, and sections 5.4 to 5.6 explain the strategy for data collection and analysis, sample and ethical procedures. In section 5.1, the ontological and epistemological positions that underpin the study are presented and in 5.2, debates about positivist and constructivist inquiry paradigms are considered. In 5.3, the rationale for selection of research methods is discussed, and focus on grounded theory as a constructivist, interpretive approach is explained. In 5.4, a strategy for implementing research methods builds on the initial design presented in Chapter 1, and sets out the grounded theory data collection and analysis techniques that are applied in the study. The triangulation of data and adherence to ethical protocols are discussed in 5.6. In 5.7, three modifications to the initial research proposal are explained, and an account of limitations of the research concludes the chapter.

### 5.1 Rationale for research methodology

Grix (2004) set out relationships between what he termed the 'building blocks of research': as ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods and sources, shown in Figure 9. In this sequence, Grix (2004:66) explained that ontology determines what is 'out there' to be known, and what form of existence it takes; epistemology then concerns the nature and form of

knowledge, and how it can be acquired and communicated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). An ontological starting point informs the epistemological position between the researcher and the subject of inquiry, which in turn determines the methodology to be selected for research, the sources of data and ways in which they can be collected.

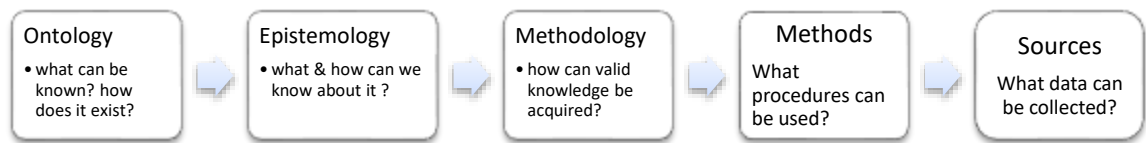


Figure 9 Building blocks of research (Grix, 2004:66)

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:5) explained ontological assumptions as either subjectively created by individual consciousness, or objectively external to individual thought. They posed the question: 'is reality of an external nature, or the result of internal cognition? Is it a given out there in the world, or is it created by one's own mind?' For these researchers, subjectivity involves an individualistic perspective, but this study considers that subjective thought is formed in and through relationships with others, following the views of Charmaz (2014:14), who asserted that 'subjectivity is inseparable from social existence'. In a realist ontological perspective, if a 'real world' is considered to exist, this view makes assumptions that 'real existence' and 'real actions' can be discovered and measured, and a research approach would consider questions which relate to this way of thinking (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A drawback of a realist view is that abstract, aesthetic or ethical ideas are less identifiable or measurable in research, as Guba & Lincoln (1994:108) argued: 'questions such as those concerning matters of aesthetic or moral significance fall outside the realms of legitimate scientific enquiry'. In this case, consideration of ways in which professional learning is developed for ethical practice tends more towards a constructionist than a realist perspective.

As a means of explaining realism and constructionism, Plato's (427-347 BC) 'allegory of the cave', devised to illustrate realism, offered an illustration of socially constructed reality. In the metaphor, prisoners chained in a cave could only see images on the facing wall. The

prisoners' perception of reality stemmed only from images which they could see, discuss and from which they derived meaning. These constructs were not however 'real', but were flickering shadows, projected against firelight by unseen masters. When the prisoners were freed, they realised that their jailers had constructed what had seemed real, and on leaving the cave, they were able to see instead the natural world. In Plato's idea, the natural world represented the truth, and the sun, goodness; whereas in the prison of the unenlightened, reality was constructed by the masters. In a further part of the allegory, enlightened prisoners were sent back into the cave in order to educate others and thus enable them to escape. Where Plato's allegory lacked explanation was the extent to which the initial prisoners were freed by masters-as-educators, or themselves sought change through collective dialogue and critical analysis of their situation. In either case, in the allegory, education represented a change in perception of what is 'real' and what is imposed as reality.

Freire's (1970) idea of consciousness-raising followed this idea of learning as a means of increasing awareness of imposed realities. The significance of the allegory for this study is that constructivism presents a means of interpreting perceptions of participants (as perceived reality) which takes cognisance of ways in which assumptions about socio-political constructs are represented and can be critiqued (through critical awareness) and considers a wider landscape of social perceptions of truth as a goal of learning. Accepting that Plato proposed realism of natural forms and universal good, the allegory is nonetheless useful for this study in determining differences between realist and constructionist views of the world and considering the positions of knowledge as externally imposed or emergent through critical consciousness.

In the study, research methodology draws from a constructionist ontological perspective, which proposes that way people perceive the reality of the world is defined by constructs devised through the interaction of social actors in specific contexts. Bryman (2008:19) explained constructionism as a view of the world that is constructed and reconstructed by participants in a continuing process of change: 'constructionism', he argued, 'is an ontological position that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only

produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision’.

Similarly, Sarantakos (2005:37) proposed that a constructionist view of reality is formed through culturally contexted human experiences: ‘constructing reality means making accounts of the world around us and gaining impressions based on culturally defined and historically situated interpretations and personal experiences’.

For some research authors, the terms constructionism and constructivism have been conflated or used interchangeably as ontological or epistemological perspectives (Crotty, 1998; Cohen et al., 2011; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Crotty differentiated between the term ‘constructivism’ as epistemological individualism: ‘meaning making of the individual mind’, and ‘constructionism’ as the collective approach: ‘the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning’ (1998: 58). To consider the ways in which constructionist and constructivist ideas of ontology and epistemology are interrelated, Guba & Lincoln’s (1994) idea of inquiry paradigms as worldviews is discussed next, with a focus on positivist and constructivist perspectives.

## 5.2 Inquiry paradigms

Guba and Lincoln (1994) used the terms paradigms or worldviews in explaining that different approaches to inquiry have ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives, which are interrelated depending on the selection of basic beliefs about the world and how the viewer is positioned in relation to these beliefs. Guba & Lincoln (1994:107) suggested four inquiry paradigms as positivist, post positivist, constructivist and critical; the main positions of these approaches are summarised in Table 7.

Worldview	Positivism	Post positivism	Constructivism	Critical theory
Ontology	Realism	Critical realism	Relativism; constructed realities	Historical realism
Epistemology	Objective	Objective	Subjective	Subjective
Methodology	Experimental; Mainly quantitative	Experimental Includes qualitative	Hermeneutics/ Dialectics	Dialogue/ Dialectical

Table 7 Four inquiry paradigms (adapted from Guba & Lincoln, 1994:109)

The implications of two of these perspectives, positivism and constructivism, are discussed in the following sections to support the selection of a constructivist approach.

### 5.2.1 Positivism

Guba & Lincoln (1994) proposed that the positivist approach takes an objective standpoint and through examination of generalisable variables can determine what is true in a situation. The researcher is external to the inquiry and from this objective stance cannot influence or be influenced by the research. Strategies are established to ensure validity and reliability, and where research findings can be replicated, true outcomes are argued. Hypotheses are proposed and empirical research questions and methods establish the truth or otherwise of propositions. Cohen et al. (2011) explained that positivism relied on the idea that what can be experienced can be observed and that empirical observations and experiments can be conducted to determine theories about human experience. Habermas (1971) criticised positivism as 'elevated to an unassailable position' (cited in Cohen et al., *ibid*) where a scientific perspective was seen as the only way to determine knowledge, particularly in mid-century US research (Charmaz, 2014). Habermas (1971) held the view that positivism had abandoned the significance of values, beliefs, and moral judgements in human behaviours and opinions, arguing that a purely scientific construct of knowledge makes for 'a society without conscience' (Habermas, cited in Cohen et al., 2011:15). The latter authors also cited Wittgenstein's (1974) comment that 'when all scientific questions have been addressed, they have left untouched the main problems of life' (Wittgenstein, in Cohen et al., *ibid*). These arguments suggest that while positivism has particular relevance to scientific and mathematical applications, in areas of social concern, it falls short of measuring matters of morality or conscience. As 'being professional' and engaging with continuing learning as a potential means of improving professional practice are considered in the literature to involve moral values and principles, it would be inappropriate to select positivism as a research approach which excludes this aspect of professionalism.

### 5.2.2 Constructivism

As an alternative to a positivist social science perspective of knowledge, constructivism incorporates qualitative and interpretative approaches (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:17)

to determining what is known. Cohen et al. (ibid) suggested that distinguishing features of constructivist research include *inter alia* the study of situated, intentional and creative activities which are fluid and changing, rather than static and measurable. Interpretation of data then involves 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973; Denzin, 1989) as representative of complex, multi-layered influences which inform the unique understandings of participants.

The idea of 'thick description' was explained by Denzin (1989:33) as capturing some or all or five types of interpretation which he identified as 'biographical, historical, situational, relational and interactional'. To include Denzin's interpretative types in the analysis of interview respondents, demographic factors of age, gender and profession were explained, together with the strategic and situational contexts of their learning. In examining processes and parameters of learning, relational and interactional factors of motivation, outcomes and boundaries and boundary crossing between contexts were considered in the data analysis.

In undertaking constructivist research, an interpretative paradigm is applied (Cohen et al., 2011). The authors explained that whereas a positivist, reductionist approach is rule-governed and scientifically measurable, the interpretative approach aims to understand the 'subjective world of human experience' (ibid). Key features of constructivism for Sarantakos (2005) were that 'there are no absolute truths', and that 'the world is constructed by people that live in it'. In their comparison of paradigms, Guba & Lincoln (1994) suggested that constructivism is underpinned by relativism, which proposes that no ideas or beliefs are universally true, but are relative to the circumstances of their application (Robson, 2002).

Relativism has been interpreted as a means of comparison, in that observation of one set of circumstances can be considered as relative to another, as in hierarchical divisions in society. Post modernists argue that this position is no longer tenable in that multiple situations and interpretations are possible; grand narratives of nominalism or realism are no longer sufficient in social research, where meanings are pluralised and multifaceted (Bruce, 2000). In this study, there is a recognition that while circumstances are relative to each respondent and in a reflexive sense, to my perception of situations and relationships with the respondents and data as researcher, meanings are interpreted in relation to socially



constructed situations. To focus on this understanding, the epistemological approach for the study is described as constructivist.

In a constructivist approach, where people are subject to and create relationships of power or oppression, cognisance of socio-cultural rules and constructs within which reality is perceived is a requirement of research. Strauss et al. (1973:13-17) considered that a preoccupation in research with the structures and rules of organisations created a tendency to overlook the extent to which organisational structures were socially constructed. Using culture as an example, Bryman (2008:20) argued that rather than understanding culture exclusively as an external set of structures, which necessarily constrains or restricts participants, culture might be seen as 'an emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction'. In this way culture, he argued, is not inert or objective, but 'is always in the process of being formed.' This concept relates to Engeström's (2001) idea of cultural-historical activity systems, discussed in Chapter 4. In presenting difference between cultural activity systems formed of principles of collectivism, historicity, multiple perspectives, contradiction and expansion, Engeström's construct exemplifies cultural activity as a point of reference. The elements and collective engagement of Engeström's activity systems offer a way to 'examine the processes by which the social world is constructed', as opposed to making assumptions about the availability of a naturalistic 'reconstituted world of phenomena for investigation' (Walsh, 1972:19).

Creswell (1994) explained that in social constructivism, people seek to interpret and understand the world they inhabit. Multiple meanings of actions, behaviours and materials are interpreted by participants in research. Rather than try to categorise these in narrow or predetermined fields, he argued that the researcher's task is to explore and attempt to understand the lived experiences. Questions posed to participants tend to be general in nature so that research participants can express their views about the topic under consideration, and responses will generally take account of their interaction with others within particular contexts: 'often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. They are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction

with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives' (Creswell, 2014:8).

Creswell pointed out that to consider the significance of historical and cultural interaction with others, the contexts where people live and work are relevant to constructivist approaches. He argued that the researcher's own life and work experiences and cultural and societal background brings particular worldview to the research and it is appropriate to recognise reflexivity of perspectives in the research process. Epistemologies which do not take a positivist view are explained by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011) as rejecting the stance of the 'detached, external researcher', proposing instead that to understand the ways in which people interpret the world, the researcher must be positioned subjectively within the context of interest. To address this aspect of reflexivity, my interests as researcher in continuing professional learning and professional context for the research were outlined in Chapter 1, and are revisited in Chapter 10.

In the next section, the rationale for selection of research methods is presented.

### 5.3 Rationale for research methods

Grix's (2004) model was adapted to give an overview of the research design for the study, presented in Chapter 1. The model has been revised in Figure 10 to separate ontological and epistemological interests, and in the double-headed arrows between methodology, methods and sources, to show an iterative process between data collection and analysis.

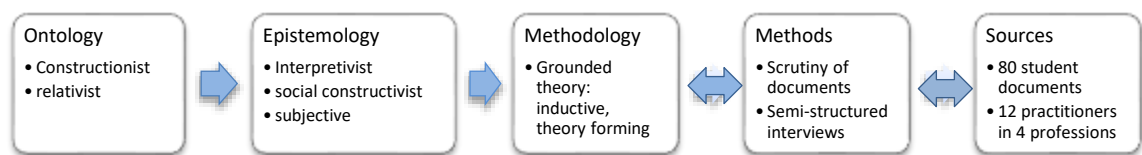


Figure 10 Research design (adapted from Grix, 2004:66)

In the study, adopting constructionist and interpretive views led to selection of research approach that recognised individual meaning making in the context of relationships with others. In support of a qualitative, interpretive research approach, Crotty (1998) suggested that the epistemological perspective of interpretivism forms the foundation of qualitative

research and enables the examination of culturally evolving social circumstances as 'culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world' (Crotty, 1998:67). Consideration of an interpretative approach guided the study towards qualitative collection and analysis of a series of semi-structured interviews contexted in collective cases, enabling the perspectives and experiences of participants to be explored within particular contexts.

From these perspectives, constructivist interpretative approaches underpin an inductive grounded theory method, informed by collective case study and narrative analysis approaches in the study. The overarching methodology for research provides a framework for devising research methods and identifying sources of data. In the example of an objective, realist view, research methods might involve scientific goal-oriented measurement, or experiments, where quantitative data collection and analysis would be particularly relevant. In a subjective constructivist approach, qualitative research methods are more appropriate in the discovery of relationships and actions through which individuals and groups perceive, interpret and recreate their worlds in an inductive process of creating theory. This approach was useful in recognising that initial theoretical frameworks had informed the research, as opposed to presenting theories to be proved or disproved by data. This allowed the data gathered from documents and through interviews to inform emergent theory using a grounded theory approach, discussed in the next section.

### 5.3.1 Grounded theory

The study used a grounded theory approach, in that theory was formed from emergent categories in the data, and through an iterative process of moving between data analysis and collection. Grounded theory is considered useful in situations where there are either too few theories, or several contradictory theories (Pfeifer, 2000:193). The latter point can be applied to multiple interpretations of continuing learning discussed in Chapter 2, and the idea of boundaries and contradictions between learning contexts. To explain the way this approach was used in the study, an overview of constructivist grounded theory based on Charmaz's (2000, 2014) ideas is given, followed by an outline of the techniques used in the study for gathering and analysis of data.

In Charmaz's account, grounded theory involves two distinctive features: an initial inductive direction from data to theory, and a subsequent iterative relationship between data and analysis, using comparative methods (Charmaz, 2014:1). Charmaz (2014:18) explained the process of grounded theory as a series of steps towards theory building, where the research aim and questions informed stages of recruiting respondents, collecting data as theoretical sampling, and an initial coding which then informed a more focused coding of categories. From this categorisation, additional data could be gathered until saturation of categories is achieved; theory is then formed and the thesis is written up. Charmaz saw this as a constructivist process, where participants in the research created meaning, and that 'assumes that people create and maintain meaningful worlds through dialectical processes of conferring meaning on their realities and acting within them ... Thus, social reality does not exist independent of human action' (Charmaz, 2000:521).

This perspective was in contrast to original interpretations of grounded theory presented by Glaser and Strauss (1967) which held an objective view that concepts or categories were 'out there' in the data, waiting to be uncovered. Supporting a constructivist approach, Charmaz argued that where earlier versions of grounded theory could be aligned with an empirically focused positivist view, Strauss and Corbin's (1990; 1998) later interpretations

imply that categories and concepts inhere within the data, awaiting the researcher's discovery... Instead, a constructivist approach recognises that the categories, concepts and theoretical level of analysis emerge from the researcher's interaction within the field and questions about the data.

(Charmaz, 2000; 522)

Charmaz explained that Glaser and Strauss's (1967) ideas of grounded theory had emerged from a combination of the authors' respective positivist and pragmatist research positions. In linking these approaches, Glaser's objective focus on 'rigorous codified methods' and emphasis on 'emergent discoveries' rather than processes, were combined with Strauss's subjective interest in human agency, social and subjective meanings, as a means of developing strategies for a systematic, interpretive qualitative research. In later years, the two authors took the work of grounded theory in differing directions. Glaser (1978) retained

an objective, positivist approach to working with social data that was more closely aligned with quantitative analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) retained the coding process of grounded theory and moved in a more adaptable direction of verification, where emergent categories might be verified by adding further data. Charmaz agreed with Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998) coding approach for grounded theory but rejected verification as a required outcome, proposing instead that a constructivist view which highlighted flexibility over mechanical application (Charmaz, 2014:13).

For Denscombe (2010) an advantage of grounded theory in a constructivist paradigm was that it presented a pragmatic and rational means of undertaking evidence-based research, and was particularly suited to exploratory inquiry of social contexts. Denscombe described essential factors of grounded theory to include fieldwork data collected early in the research process; iterative analysis with constant reference to data; 'modest localised explanations' based on contexted evidence, and based on an emergent process (Denscombe, 2010:120-121). Critics of interpretative grounded theory (Glaser, 1978) suggested that the method fragmented respondent's narrative, forced data and analysis into pre-determined categories and relied on 'full conceptual description' rather than emergent theory. Charmaz refuted this criticism as concerned with early, more quantitative, technical approaches, arguing that 'constructivist grounded theory adopts an inductive, comparative, emergent and open-ended approach' (Charmaz, 2014:12). A second criticism of the early interpretation of the approach was Glaser and Strauss's (1967) expectation of discussion of literature at the end of a study, following the identification of research themes, as opposed to an introductory literature review. As this particular research began with a review of literature, this point is significant and is discussed next as 'informed grounded theory' (Thornberg, 2012).

### 5.3.2 Informed grounded theory

As grounded theory is concerned with creating theory from data, in the majority of studies using this approach the literature review is developed at the end of the study, linking data to relevant literature at a stage of writing up the emergent theories of the inquiry (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978). For this study, the Professional Doctorate guidelines (ESWCE, 2011) stipulated a general review of literature as the first submission requirement.

For this study, this meant that a broad-based investigation of literature on the topics of 'professions, professionalism and professional learning' preceded the development of research design and methodology. In this way, a decision to follow a grounded theory approach was made after the literature review had been carried out, which created a challenge in ensuring the validity of ideas drawn from the data and at the same time building relationships between grounded theory and theory in literature.

Where Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocated delaying the literature review until after data analysis, to avoid an influence of 'received theory' on the interpretation of data and coding of emergent categories, Strauss and Corbin (1990:48) later qualified this idea by arguing that 'we all bring to the inquiry a considerable background in professional and disciplinary literature'. Lather (1986) proposed that grounded theory could work in a way that develops iterative relationships between data and theory, which do not necessitate reliance on debating one particular theory.

Building empirically grounded theory requires a reciprocal relationship between data and theory. Data must be allowed to generate propositions in a dialectical manner that permits use of 'a priori' theoretical frameworks, but which keeps a particular framework from being the container into which the data must be poured.

(Lather, 1986:267)

Following this argument, literature in this study was used to inform understanding of key theories and ideas, rather than structure a theoretical framework for examination of data. For example, comparisons could be made between empirical data and theories of learning in the study, such as Bateson's (1972) levels, Engeström's (2009) activity systems or Aristotle's prospect of *phronēsis*, without anticipation that these ideas require to be proved or disproved within the specific contexts and experiences of participants in the study.

Charmaz agreed with Strauss and Corbin's (1990) view that researchers are most likely to have considerable knowledge about literature in their fields of practice which will inform research ideas and that 'grounded theorists increasingly recognise that lack of familiarity with literature is unlikely and untenable' (2014:306). From a similar perspective, Thornberg (2012) denied the need to delay review of extant literature in grounded theory, and proposed

instead benefits of what he termed 'informed grounded theory' to include 'inspiration, ideas...creative associations, critical reflections and multiple lenses'. Key aspects of Thornberg's argument are presented here, as the question of location of literature can be a subject of debate in relation to grounded theory, and it is important for this study to justify the relevance of an informed grounded theory approach. Thornberg explained the concept as appropriate in a constructivist approach and reflective of the pragmatist view of abduction, which represents unanticipated emergent ideas. As Thornberg's idea of informed grounded theory (denoted as GT) is key to this study, an extended outline of his view of this approach is given.

What I call informed grounded theory refers to a product of a research process as well as to the research process itself, in which both the data and literature have been thoroughly grounded in data by GT methods while being informed by research literature and theoretical frameworks. In contrast to the classic GT tradition but in accordance with the constructivist GT tradition, an informed grounded theorist sees the advantage of pre-existing theories and research findings in the substantive field in a sensitive, creative and flexible way, instead of seeing them as obstacles or threats. Informed GT has its roots in constructivist GT and the pragmatist idea of abduction...as long as the researcher rejects pure induction and the dictum of delaying literature, uses the logic of abduction during the whole research process and recognises his or her embeddedness within a historical, ideological and socio-cultural context, and hence the data are always social constructions and not exact pictures of the reality.

(Thornberg, 2012:7)

In his argument, Thornberg stressed the location of the researcher in a socially constructed context and rather than deduction from a predetermined framework, proposed induction towards informed theory building, emphasising abductive reasoning in the process.

Abduction refers to a concept introduced by Aristotle and developed by Peirce (1839-1914).

In addition to traditional inductive and deductive modes of inference, Peirce argued that a third abductive form of reasoning allowed recognition of observed facts in particular circumstances and drawing these together to form a tentative hypothesis. Unlike deductive

inference that tests a hypothesis from a general rule and a given case, or inductive inference that forms a hypothetical rule from a specific case and observed information, abductive inference involves a process of developing new knowledge from the facts as they are known in specific circumstances. Observations of a context were related to a hypothesis that then linked known facts to a general way of explaining the context in relation to wider circumstances (Svennevig, 2001).

Examples of abduction were given by Svennevig as the way doctors might diagnose an illness from the 'facts as they are known', where information might be restricted. Peirce drew from Aristotle's explanation that the process of abduction extended beyond a generalisation of what is observed. Interpretation and prioritising of significance would be involved, and this process facilitated a further 'leap of faith' or insight to create new knowledge. Aristotle had explained this insight as 'stringing pearls', where inductive categorisation was insufficient with an abductive means of linking and forming relationships between the factors of data.

The particular facts are not merely brought together, but there is a new element (1990; 1998) added to the combination by the very act of thought by which they are combined [...]. The pearls are there, but they will not hang together until someone provides the string.

(Aristotle, cited in Givón; 1989:286)

This section has explained the research process as both inductive and abductive, in combination as 'abductory induction' (Peirce, 1955:152). Across these processes, grounded theory analysis forms the basis of identifying Aristotle's idea of 'pearls' as key categories in the data, joined together by a 'string' as theory constructed through data analysis.

To examine ways in which continuing learning related to particular contexts, a collective case study method informed the categorisation of data collected in the semi-structured interviews by profession. The relevance of this approach to the research is discussed in the next section.



### 5.3.3 Collective case studies

For this study, Stake's (2000) idea of the collective case study was used to inform the position of professional groups of the study. Whereas case studies are frequently used to examine single cases of individuals or organisations, it is possible to consider collective cases to consider typical features. In Stake's (2000:437) collective case study approach, a number of cases are examined in order to determine any common characteristics and present 'a phenomenon, population or general condition', which may or may not be apparent in an individual case. The collective case study, in its own right a method for collecting and analysing data, was useful in organising semi-structured interview data analysis. Thinking about professions as collective cases enabled consideration of continuing learning policy perspectives of the four selected professions, and the categorisation of data in relation to these professions, which then contributed to the overall grounded theory approach.

In the next part of section 5.3, an overview of narrative reading is given, in order to explain the relevance of this approach to the study, and ways in which it has contributed to the analysis of semi-structured interview transcripts. Again, rather than using a structured narrative analysis approach in the study, these ideas have informed a reading of interview transcripts through a narrative lens. The term 'narrative reading' is used to describe this process.

### 5.3.4 Narrative Reading

Recognition that the research participants' views were culturally and politically situated was a significant aspect of the study and of a social constructivist standpoint, as Dewey (1916: 287) explained: 'individuals adopt the values and perspectives of their social group in a way that these factors become the way they view the world'. From this point of view, reading the interview transcripts as narratives became a useful way of interpreting responses that were located within the specific professional contexts. A key point of significance in recognising the transcripts as narratives was the potential to determine what was implied or hinted at, but not explicitly outlined, which enhanced the potential for uncovering any implicit aspects of responses.

Labov's (1972, 1982) structural approach to narrative analysis informed a reading of the transcribed semi-structured interviews as stories told by the research participants. Labov suggested that stories were commonly made up of six elements: an abstract or summary of the action; orientation in terms of time, place, participants, context; a complicating action, which concerned analysis of a situation or sequence of events; and evaluation that interpreted the meaning of the action, including the narrator's attitude. Resolution presented the outcomes of action and coda returned from the action of the story to the present situation and proposed future action (Labov, 1972, 1982; Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Riessman, 1993, 2008). In this study, the 'orientation' aspect of narratives provided information about learning contexts; the 'complicating action' was represented by boundaries, 'evaluation' was carried out as an interpretation of circumstances and the 'resolution' and 'coda' were apparent as outcomes and impacts of learning.

In a similar perspective on narrative analysis, Allenye (2015:57) explained that Aristotle (384-322 BC) introduced the early form of narrative analysis, which later authors developed as structures for creating or reviewing narrative. In Aristotle's construct, which was applied to dramatic works, the format of three acts was used. Act 1 represented a stage of stability, disrupted in Act 2, and resolved in Act 3. Where stability was resumed in the third stage, some form of change had occurred to reconstruct or renew the situation. An expansion of Aristotle's ideas was apparent in Campbell's (1993, 2014) idea of the 'hero's journey', a construct which has underpinned much of twentieth and twenty-first century literature, films and games (Alleyne, 2015). The journey begins in a stable context, where a challenge is presented. Initially reluctant to take up the challenge, with the intervention of a mentor, the hero accepts. The hero then moves from the ordinary world to a special world, where disequilibrium occurs and trials are undertaken to achieve the goal. On return, the hero's perception of the ordinary world has changed, as in Mezirow's (1978) suggestion of perspective transformation. These three stages of 'equilibrium, disruption and return to new equilibrium' (Alleyne, 2015) resonate with Bateson (1972) and Engeström's (2009) ideas of contradiction as necessary to critical thinking about practice, which then leads to changed awareness and consequent transformation of circumstances. In continuing learning, the process exemplifies a work-based learner undertaking academic study, where the learner

accepts challenges, and supported by a mentor, achieves their goal in the 'special world' of the university, and returns with changed perspective to the 'ordinary world' of the workplace.

A limitation of using narrative in relation to grounded theory was Barthes' (1993) argument of 'the naivety' of using narrative in an inductive study, where he suggested that in post-modern context there were too many narratives to be considered. Alleyne offered a solution of considering narrative as 'categorised' or as 'connected' (2015: 49). Taking this more general approach to narrative analysis and using this device to surface boundaries as contradictions or dilemmas, rather than using narrative as a primary approach to data analysis allows 'unique characteristics of a particular case' (Alleyne, 2015: 49) to be considered as relative to emergent categories. In the study, the process of reading interview transcripts through a narrative lens helped to draw out respondents' personal experiences of motivation, outcomes, characteristics, boundaries and boundary crossing in continuing learning, which offered insight into contradictions and necessary factors of continuing learning.

Next, a rationale for selection of semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis as two data collection techniques used in the study.

#### 5.3.6 Semi-structured Interviews

The main approach to data collection in the study was a series of semi-structured interviews with twelve practitioners, who were representative of four professional contexts in Scotland. The selection of semi-structured interviews as a key method of collecting data was to invite 'thick description' derived from the respondents' own interpretations and contexts (Stake, 2000: 439; Geertz, 1973; Denzin, 1989), which in turn would lead to 'thick interpretation and meaning' (Ponterotto, 2006). The idea of 'thick description' was explained by Denzin (1989) as comprising four key features.

- 1) It gives the context of an act; 2) it states the intentions and meanings that
- organise the action; 3) it traces the evolution and development of the act; 4) it
- presents the action as a text that can then be interpreted. A *thin description* (italics in original) simply reports facts, independent of intentions or the circumstances that
- surround an action. (Denzin, 1989: 33)

To develop 'thick description', semi-structured interviews were useful in encouraging participants to describe and discuss their continuing learning experiences from their own perspectives, rather than to direct or restrict responses through fixed questions.

Stake (2000) explained that this focus built on the emic, or subjective notion of interview responses in qualitative research, as opposed to an etic, or objective approach, that might involve, for example, a survey method of gathering data. The term 'semi-structured' is taken to mean that the researcher can be more flexible in adjusting the interview questions to encourage the respondent to elaborate on particular topics (Denscombe, 2010). This allows the interviewer to adapt the order of questions, probe more deeply a particular question or add additional questions to extend responses in a specific area of interest. This approach is in contrast to a structured interview, where exactly the same questions would be asked of all respondents, in the same way.

Charmaz (2014:57), explaining interviews as 'conducting a more-or-less directed conversation' described primary practices of interviewing for grounded theory as 'intensive interviews', indicating that qualitative research draws from 'informational, intensive and investigative' strategies. By this, Charmaz meant that the informative approach attracts factual information, whereas the investigative interview aims to uncover, assumptions, actions or intentions or policies and their implications that may be implicit rather than explicit in responses. Charmaz proposed that the investigative approach would incorporate characteristics of

- selection of participants with first-hand experience of the topic of research;
- in-depth exploration of participants' experience and situations;
- reliance on open ended questions;
- objective of obtaining detailed responses;
- emphasis of understanding the participants' perspective, meanings and experience;
- practice of following up on unanticipated areas of inquiry hints and implicit views and accounts of actions.

(Charmaz, 2014:56)

This structure was adopted in carrying out semi-structured interviews, and while the latter term is preferred, the interpretations of Charmaz's ideas of 'intensive' interviewing were applied to the process. Disadvantages of interviews as a structured investigation can be recognised as the collection of facts, views and opinions selected by the respondent in response to specific questions, chosen by the researcher and applied within a set timescale of the research or interview. This can omit an exchange of views, Czarniawska (2004) suggested, as 'inter-views', or dialogue between the researcher and respondent which might develop responses as a wider picture of the respondents' experience. Successful interviews for Czarniawska (2004) occurred where respondents are given sufficient time and space to develop their thoughts and ideas. In this research, interviews were conducted from periods of forty to sixty minutes. A disadvantage of longer interviews was that transcription is more time-consuming, and provides larger data sets. A significant aspect of semi-structured interviews was the potential to include personal views and interpretations that could extend beyond the interview questions and provided rich data from the respondents' unique experiences of continuing professional learning.

To triangulate data collection techniques, analysis and respondent sample, a second approach was analysis of two types of documents drawn from an undergraduate work-based degree programme. This aspect of data collection and analysis is explained next.

#### 5.3.7 Documents

Advantages of the collection and analysis of existing archived documents included the potential to draw out comparisons across wider data about the choices, characteristics and outcomes of study. Charmaz (2014) warned that archived documents should not be seen as factual, as in the context of their production, specific purposes and frameworks would influence and define the construction of written materials. A second disadvantage of using existing materials for Charmaz was that these may not provide sufficient contextual information about the demographics of contributors, to enable comparisons to be drawn in connection with social contexts, for example employment role, gender, age or race. In support of the use of documents as initial data, Charmaz (2014:54) advised that in grounded theory, scrutiny of one form of data could lead to realisation that a second form of data would

expand the analysis: 'collecting another kind of data with a different method may answer questions in your emerging analysis'. In this respect, differences between the two forms of data as documents and semi-structured interviews allowed consideration of a wider and more diverse range of influences, purposes and stages of learning.

Access to documents not in the public domain was indicated as a possible disadvantage of this form of research (Denscombe, 2010). In this study, the researcher was located in a professional setting which enabled a request to be made to study archived documents relating to student motivation for and reflection on undertaking academic study as continuing professional development in the workplace. This provided a unique opportunity to draw from documents that are not routinely accessed for research purposes. Denscombe (2010:222) considered that four criteria concerning validity of 'authenticity, representativeness, meaning and credibility' were significant to documentary research. Where access for the documents used in the study required permissions, ethical processes were followed; and questions of authenticity and timescale were addressed in archival storage procedures. In terms of credibility, Denscombe suggested that the purpose of a document, when it was produced and by whom, had a bearing on its credibility and representativeness. Disadvantages of documentary research for Denscombe were that documents scrutinized as secondary data, ie not in the context of their production, might be less relevant to the specific aims of the investigation. Denscombe (2014:233) argued that documents were socially constructed and as such could 'owe more to the interpretations of those who produce them than to an objective picture of reality'. In this case, subjective and socially constructed perspectives of respondents were appropriate to the study and contributed to credibility and representativeness of the data.

In this section of Chapter 5, a rationale for the research paradigm and methods was outlined. This explained constructivist grounded theory as the overarching inductive and abductive interpretive data collection and analysis approach that followed the social constructivist research paradigm selected for the study. Two other research methods which informed data analysis were discussed; collective case study as a means of clustering respondent perspectives in four professional contexts, and narrative reading of interviews as a means of

recognising individual, implicit influences on participant's learning journeys. In the next section, the strategy for the collection and analysis of data is presented. The section outlines aspects of the research design and indicates ways in which research process was carried out.

#### 5.4 Research methods

As detailed in the previous section, a constructivist grounded theory methodology informed the selection of research methods and data collection techniques. Aspects of the research design that relate to this section are presented in Figure 11.

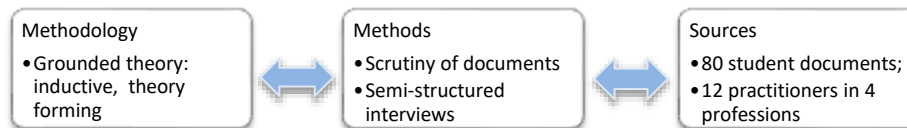


Figure 11 Research strategy: from methodology to methods

In this section, stages of data collection that relate to a process of developing grounded theory are first outlined in section 5.4.1. Data sampling, triangulation of data and the application of research questions to two data sets are explained. Data collection of two types of data is then described in sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3. Grounded theory analysis and coding processes are presented in section 5.4.4, and ethical protocols applied in the study are outlined in 5.4.5. First, the staged process of data collection and analysis that was applied in the study is described.

##### 5.4.1 Stages of data collection and analysis

To explain the implementation of a grounded theory approach in the study, four stages of data gathering and analysis are presented in Figure 12, described as documentary analysis, and as initial, second and third rounds of semi-structured interviews.



Figure 12 Stages of research showing grounded theory approach

In the figure, the first stage of data analysis was to scrutinize documents on motivation for and impact of academic professional learning, drawn from documents of an undergraduate programme. The combined results from Data Set 1 contributed to comparisons of the topics of motivation and impact derived from the interviews, as part of a process of building grounded theory. In the second stage, eight interviews were conducted and transcribed. An initial analysis of findings focused on categories of contradictions and boundaries between work and study experienced by five of the eight professional practitioners. These findings were discussed in an exploratory paper on a theme of 'collaborative change through continuing professional development', submitted to the 2014 ProPEL conference on professional learning (Martin, 2014). Findings from the initial interviews produced a theme of professional accountability as a particular context for continuing learning, and this led to two alterations to the research plan. These were i) learning contexts of academic and workplace learning were extended to include 'profession', and ii) to examine the ways in which professional policies influenced learning requirements, processes and outcomes, the sample of respondents were purposively selected from four professions of education, social work, community education and nursing. These amendments are discussed in more detail in section 5.5.2.

In stage three, a further six semi-structured interviews were conducted, transcribed and coded. A fourth stage was added to follow up themes of professional learning, and discover any profession specific registration requirements or learning initiatives. The overall number of interviews conducted was twenty, with sixteen respondents. Initial interviews were carried out during June-August 2013 and the second round was conducted from October to March 2014. The third set of interviews took place in November-December 2014, with one final interview in August 2015. Next, sampling processes are described.

#### 5.4.1.1 Data sampling

In the study, sampling was exploratory, purposive and theoretical. The sampling strategy for semi-structured interviews was exploratory, in that a small-scale sample was selected, appropriate to qualitative research of a topic which seeks to examine an area of interest and generate 'insights and information' in the development of new ideas and theories about the



topic. This is contrast to a representative sample, which tends towards large scale, quantitative surveys that draw from a cross-section of a population (Denscombe, 2010). Purposive sampling means selecting a small sample of respondents who have been particularly chosen on the basis of the relevance of their knowledge and experience of the topic (Denscombe, 2010). Purposive sampling was applied to the selection of two types of documents from an undergraduate programme of relevance to with the research topic of professional learning. Within purposive selection of documents as relevant and informative, a random selection of the application statements and reflective accounts was made from archived materials.

The overall approach of theoretical sampling was guided by a grounded theory approach selected for the inquiry. Theoretical sampling means selecting sources of information that respond to the development of theory as the research progresses. As categories are determined, purposive sampling is used to modify or construct new categories. New data is sought in relation to these categories until a point of saturation is reached, where the researcher is satisfied that no more data is required (Charmaz, 2014). Where an initial set of respondents were selected through purposive sampling, this introduced categories of profession, work and academy. To generate data that responded to all three categories, respondents who had knowledge and experience of continuing learning in the three contexts were purposively selected. As described in the previous subsection, six interviews were conducted with participants on this basis. A third round of purposive sampling was then undertaken with two new and four existing respondents to develop the emergence of categories concerning the continuing learning requirements of professional agencies.

#### 5.4.1.2 Data triangulation

In the study, four forms of triangulation were used, to add a range of perspectives of the data and provide 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of data in relation to the cultural context of its production. One form of triangulation was in types of data collection, where data drawn from documentary research formed Data Set 1, and data from semi-structured interviews formed Data Set 2. A second form involved the situated context of data, as concerned with the three learning contexts, and as undergraduate academic study in Data Set 1 and postgraduate

study in Data Set 2. Thirdly, the consideration of respondents from four professional groupings in Data Set 2 added a further perspective of triangulation in terms of occupational context. A fourth form of triangulation related to method, where aspects of collective case study and narrative methods of analysis informed the grounded theory approach. The aim of triangulation in data type, contexts of learning and profession and method was to contribute to the validity and reliability of the analysis, where different sources of data allow corroboration of emergent ideas. Triangulation also allows one set of data to complement another in presenting a more complete picture of the topic of study, where consistency across data contributes to validity of the research (Denscombe, 2010, 2014; Creswell, 2014).

#### 5.4.1.3 Application of research questions to Data Sets 1 & 2

Next, the research questions for the study are set out in Table 8, together with the way these questions were applied to documents (DS1) and in semi-structured interviews (DS 2).

Research Questions	DS1: Documents	DS2: Semi-structured Interviews
1. What historical and contemporary trends contribute to understanding the concepts of professions, professionalism and professional learning?	In what ways are professions, professionalism and professional learning described? What trends are apparent?	What professional role(s), career, qualifications undertaken? How are ideas of professions, professionalism or professional learning described?
2. What are the motivations for and outcomes of continuing professional learning?	What was personal motivation for academic study? What CPD/CPL offered and/or required in workplace? What were outcomes of academic, professional, workplace learning?	What was personal motivation for study? What strategic requirements or opportunities for CPD/CPL? What were outcomes of academic, professional, workplace learning? How was learning shared/disseminated?
3. What are key characteristics and contexts of continuing professional learning?	What characteristics or processes of continuing learning are described in the documents?	What forms of continuing learning have been undertaken? In what contexts are these located?
4. What boundaries and synergies can be identified between continuing professional learning contexts?	What boundaries and synergies between continuing professional learning contexts are apparent in documents?	What boundaries and synergies were apparent between continuing professional learning contexts?
5. What necessary factors can be determined for continuing professional learning as a means of enhancing individual, professional and societal capacities for common good?	What necessary factors can be determined in documents for continuing professional learning as enhancing individual, professional and societal capacities?	What are key factors for continuing professional learning as a means of enhancing individual, professional and societal capacities?

Table 8 Research questions applied to Data Sets 1 & 2

Data collection processes are described next. Two kinds of data were collected, from documents and from semi-structured interviews, designated respectively as Data Sets 1 and 2 (DS1; DS2) and these are explained in the next two parts of section 5.4.

#### 5.4.2 Data collection: documents (DS1)

In Data Set 1, two samples of documents from a work-based undergraduate programme in professional development were selected, described as application statements (DS1a) and reflective accounts (DS1b). The documents were chosen by selecting every fourth applicant in files which had been archived alphabetically and by year of entry, to provide a cross section of professions, ages, geography and gender. First, applications were selected from files from 2011-2013 and second, reflective accounts were chosen from files where students had completed their studies prior to 2011. The later selection process was followed in order to ensure no conflict of interest between researcher and students, in that as the researcher (as detailed in section 1.2) was also programme leader from 2011. In the first group of data, 37 application statements (of 40) were scrutinized. In the second data group, 37 (of 40) reflective accounts of outcomes and impacts of study were examined. Documents from this programme were selected as representative of a generic workplace based professional development degree, where application statements indicated motivation for study and reflective accounts described outcomes and impacts of learning. The aim of selecting documents from this programme was to sample perspectives of academic study as continuing professional learning on the part of a range of mid-career professionals. The types and purposes of data are shown in Table 9.

Type of data	Description of data	No	Purpose of data
Application statements (DS1a)	Reasons for applying for study; anticipated outcomes.	40	To determine motivation for academic study as continuing learning.
Reflective accounts (DS1b)	Motivation; challenges; outcomes or impacts of study.	40	To determine motivations, boundaries and impacts of academic study as continuing learning.

Table 9 Data Set 1: two types of data

In order to anonymise data in terms of names, job titles, geographical location and specialised programmes of study, identifiers were applied to the documents by gender, age

and general professional occupation. As an example, respondent F/37/VS was female, aged 37, working in the voluntary sector. In the second group of documents, where age was not provided, identifiers were applied by gender and occupation; where M/FE/4 represented a male practitioner in further education, fourth in that group. In terms of triangulation of data in the study, there were differences between professional context and level of study in the two types of data. Documentary data concerned undergraduate academic study across a range of professional contexts, whereas the semi-structured interviews focused on participants from four specific professions who had undertaken mainly postgraduate study, the majority of whom had moved from professional managerial positions to work in the same professional context in higher education. Next, data collection in semi-structured interviews is explained.

#### 5.4.3 Data collection: semi-structured interviews (DS2)

The second set of data collected for the study comprised semi-structured interviews with practitioners who had undertaken academic study, mainly at postgraduate levels, while in professional practice. From an initial sample across a wider range of professions, four professional groupings, described in broad terms as education, community education, social work and nursing were selected for analysis in the study. A total of 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted with sixteen professional practitioners who had completed accredited academic study as continuing professional development.

To explain the process of sampling, an initial set of eight semi-structured interviews was carried out with practitioners from a wider range of professions, including nursing, accountancy, social work, community education and higher education. These interviews were initially designated as pilot interviews to test and adjust research questions. On analysis of the initial round of eight semi-structured interviews, in some interviews, continuing professional development was described in connection with professional registration as well as academic study. Following a grounded theory approach, 'profession' as a learning context had become an emergent theme, which meant that further data on this topic would be required. To address this, 'profession' was added as a third context of learning which might incur boundaries between contexts for learners, and a second round of semi-structured interviews was conducted with practitioners who represented four

professions of education, community education, nursing and social work. Selecting four professions meant that it could be possible to consider the professions as collective groups, to examine any common themes within each and link these to professional opportunities and requirements. For each professional group, an overview of the relevant continuing learning strategic policy was presented in Chapter 1, section 1.7.

It was anticipated that comparison of cross-cutting themes across professions would inform the significance of emergent categories in response to the research questions. This process followed the grounded theory approach, in developing theories about the topic from participant responses rather than testing theories drawn from the initial broad based literature review. Rather than a study of practice driven by theory, this allowed ideas from participants to form the basis of socially constructed ideas, which could then be compared across data from documents and from four professions, and subsequently with theoretical constructs drawn from literature.

#### 5.4.3.1 Description of semi-structured interview sample (DS2)

The sample of respondents comprised practitioners who had at least ten years' experience of professional practice and had carried out academic study while in the workplace. These factors enabled representation of ongoing learning through workplace experience and through accredited academic study. Respondents were from four professional groupings of community education, education, nursing and social work. Interviewees were selected purposively as respondents who could contribute experience of work and learning in particular contexts, for example in returning to study, undertaking professional examinations and non-regulatory professional association. An initial group of eight participants from a range of professions had been interviewed as a pilot to test the interview questions. While analysis of all pilot interviews was not included in the final study, these interviews were useful in providing initial categories of trends, motivation, characteristics, boundaries, outcomes of continuing learning, in contexts of academy, work and profession. This informed the research questions and initiated a process of constructing grounded theory which was then further explored in documents and in the sample which represented four professions.

In the selected sample of twelve participants, all had undertaken professional accredited study in the workplace and had significant (ie ten years or more) workplace experience. Seven had moved from fieldwork locations to work full-time in higher education at the time of the research, which took place between 2013 and 2015. Three were part-time, two of whom worked across settings of fieldwork and academic practice. A decision to select professional practitioners who had moved into higher education was significant in two ways. The first related to my practice setting in higher education while undertaking a professional doctorate, which encouraged the investigation of interests of relevance to the researcher's practice context. The second was that this selection enabled consideration of the participants' continuing learning in work-located practice, prior to a move into higher education, and would enable discussion of the outcomes of academic study in relation to personal, workforce and career development. In Table 10, a non-identifiable overview of each participant's work experience and qualifications is given.

Group	Code	ID	Alias	Work	Academy	Profession
Community Education (CE)	CE1F40	A	Anna	Manager Lecturer	Master's Doctoral	Non-member
	CE2F40	B	Beth	Practitioner Lecturer	Master's Doctoral	Member
	CE3M50	C	Chris	Manager Lecturer	Master's	Member
Education (E)	ED1F40	D	Donna	Teacher Lecturer	Master's	Non-member
	ED2F40	E	Emma	Teacher Lecturer	Master's	Member
	ED3F30	F	Flora	Practitioner Lecturer	Master's Doctoral	Member
Nursing (N)	N1F50	G	Gerda	Practitioner Manager	Master's	Member
	N2 F50	H	Helen	Practitioner Manager	Master's	Member
	N3M50	J	Jim	Manager Lecturer	Master's Doctoral	Member
Social Work (SW)	SW1F50	K	Kirsty	Manager Lecturer	Master's Doctorate	NA
	SW2F50	L	Lisa	Manager	Master's	Member
	SW3F50	M	Mary	Practitioner Lecturer	Degree(s) Prof Awards	NA

Table 10 Respondent indicators: Data Set 2

The table shows professional work roles held by participants when undertaking academic study, the level of study attained, and membership of professional agencies. 'Doctoral'

indicates that respondents were undertaking accredited doctoral level research at the time of interview, either as a PhD or Professional Doctorate; 'Doctorate' indicates completed study.

The four professions were organised in alphabetical order and have been described in generic rather than profession-specific terms, for example 'education', rather than primary or secondary teaching; 'nursing' rather than paediatric or mental health nursing. In the interests of anonymising data, respondents' designated employment role or specific qualifications were omitted. In the table, professions are described as education (ED); community education (CE); nursing (N) and social work (SW). Gender was indicated as F or M, and age range rather than specific age is given, where '40' indicates an age range of 40-50. Each interview respondent was allocated an alphabetical initial, omitting the letter 'I' to avoid grammatical confusion. Assumed names related to each allocated initial were then used to identify participants. Accepting that the use of personal names might add a layer of cultural identity which could influence the researcher or reader, giving the respondents names seemed to humanise the responses, appropriate in a constructivist research. To avoid any associative influence and ensure anonymity, the selected names had no relationships to respondents or to the researcher. For concise referencing, where quotations are given, only the respondent's identifying initial is used, together with an NVivo text coding reference to show the position of the quotation in the transcribed interview.

#### 5.4.4 Grounded theory analysis and coding

To cluster responses, Strauss and Corbin's (1998) grounded theory analysis approach of identifying and analysing data in three stages of open, axial and selective coding was followed. This was described by the authors as

- open coding to find the categories,
- axial coding to interconnect them and
- selective coding to establish the core category or categories.

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998, cited in Robson, 2002:493)

Coding involved first identifying general categories in the data; second, determining relationships between these categories and third, conceptualising core categories from the

relationships (Robson, 2002). This approach as the key method of analysis was applied to documented accounts and semi-structured interviews. To explain the use of terms in the study: 'coding' was used to describe the label given to a phrase or sequence; 'category' was used to indicate a group of coded segments, and 'selective categories' were designated as key elements in the data (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 2015). Initially, NVivo software was used at an open coding stage to generate categories, and was later used in providing indicators for direct quotations drawn from interview transcripts. In coding data, selective categories derived from documents as the first group of data (DS1a) were used to inform the analysis of the second group of documents (DS1b) and the semi-structured interviews. In the analytical coding, a narrative reading of the documentary accounts and interview transcripts allowed a 'thick description' of unique contexts and perspectives of participants and these were supported with both short and long quotations. In analysis of the interviews, excerpts from transcriptions form the basis of analysis which allowed the reader to gain a sense of the participants' views about continuing learning. Ponterotto (2006: 57) argued that a thick description of results would represent 'adequate "voice" of participants; that is, long quotes from the participants or excerpts of interviewer-interview dialogue'. In Ponterotto's view, this would allow the reader to better understand key aspects of the primary expression and experience of the interviewee, before a secondary layer of interpretation is added by the researcher. In interpretation, it is then possible for the reader to consider if they would have come to the same interpretative conclusions as the researcher.

From a thick description of data, in the analysis, it was useful to draw from Corbin and Strauss's recommendations to use diagrams to structure and present correlations between categories in the data. Corbin and Strauss (2008: 125) explained diagrams as 'conceptual visualisations' which helped the researcher to organise concepts and their relationships, and to 'think about data in "lean ways", that is in a manner that reduces the data to their essence'. The authors agreed with Miles and Huberman's use of diagrams in qualitative analysis.

Conceptual frameworks are best done graphically, rather than in text. Having to get the entire framework out on a single page obliges you to specify the bins that hold the



discrete phenomena, to map likely relationships, to divide the variables that are conceptually or functionally distinct, and to work with all of the information at once.

(Miles & Huberman, 1994:2)

Following these suggestions, diagrams have been used in the data analysis. These have helped to organise and determine relationships between data in order to conceptualise selective categories in a process of constructivist grounded theory. In this study, 'diagram' is used as a generic term which includes tables, graphs and figures.

Next, ethical procedures about participant confidentiality and choice are outlined.

#### 5.4.5 Ethical protocols

The study adhered to data protection protocols required by the University of Dundee and the School of Education, Social Work and Community Education. A proposal for the research was approved by the University of Dundee Research Ethics Committee (UREC) following minor amendments, on 10.6.13 (see Appendix 1). As the topic of investigation in examining boundaries between work and learning invited interest in personal perspectives and views of participants, an important aspect of the inquiry was that any disclosure of personal information through narrative was respected in terms of privacy. To ensure self-determination and participant choice, respondents were given prior information about the study, including aims, data collection methods, storage of data and reporting of findings, in order to make an informed choice about whether or not they wished to take part. Those who agreed to participate in the study were asked to return a signed copy of the participant informed consent form. An introduction to the research was given before each interview, which concluded with a debriefing session. The right of individuals to decide not to continue with participation in the research, for whatever reason, was respected. Participants were offered transcriptions, and preference was indicated via the permissions form (Appendix 1); one request was made which was followed up, but with no adjustments.

Confidentiality of identity of all respondents who participated in the study has been maintained. While reference was made to general professional contexts and employment roles, every care has been taken to respect the rights to privacy of participants. For this

reason, no personal names, ages, job titles or geographical locations have been identified in the data analysis or reporting. Email addresses and telephone numbers required to arrange interviews were stored securely and separately from data. All data were anonymised and indications of specific academic qualifications or employment roles were removed. Quotations from documents and from transcribed interviews were given alphabetical and numerical identifications that could not be related to respondents. These arrangements adhere to principles of ethical practice in research (Sarantakos, 2005) which are summarised in Table 11.

Information	Clear information about the purpose and process of the research, identity of researcher, who is involved, why it is being carried out and to whom it will be reported has been provided.
Choice	Participants have had a free and informed choice about whether or not to participate in the research.
Privacy	Respondents have been given the right to choose not to respond to any questions they consider to be sensitive or private.
Anonymity	Respondents have been given the right to remain anonymous.
Data Protection	All data has been stored securely in locked areas and password protected computers. Data will be destroyed on completion of the study.
Confidentiality	Responses to the research are not made available to others.
Welfare	The welfare of respondents has been essential, ensuring no harm, embarrassment, discomfort or risk to participants in the research.

Table 11 Ethical procedures (adapted from Sarantakos, 2005:19)

To conclude Chapter 5, the next section explains modifications to the initial research plan.

#### 5.4.6 Modifications to research proposal

This section explains three modifications made to the initial research proposal (Appendix 1), which followed the earlier submission of a general review of literature as a requirement of the Professional Doctorate (ESWCE, 2011). These modifications were: i) amendments to the literature review topic of 'credentialism, professionalism and professional learning' to 'synergies in continuing professional learning' ii) a move from considering boundaries between academic and workplace learning, to boundaries between three learning contexts of profession, academy and workplace and iii) a move from using the key elements of Engeström's (2009) activity system as a framework for deductive analysis, to a grounded theory approach which generated emergent categories from the data and fostered inductive and abductive analytical approaches.

The first modification stemmed from the initial literature review, which examined ideas about professions and professionalism and later added a third theme of credentialism. This latter theme related to boundary issues between academic study and workplace based learning in professions and introduced a critique of ongoing academic study as a means of reinforcing divisions in society. The original review was revised by adding new reading on continuing professional learning, and by amending existing literature in an iterative process as categories were determined in the data. A further amendment was that ways in which ethical practice was learned and developed seemed necessary to ideas of professional learning, but had no central location in learning theories underpinning the study. For this reason, an initial discussion of Aristotle's idea of *phronēsis* (Flyvbjerg, 2001) was expanded to encompass developmental ethical theories described as 'ethical learning' in Chapter 4.

The second modification was adding 'profession' as a context for learning in the study. In the initial research proposal, an assumption had been made that the academy and workplace were primary locations for continuing learning. From data gathered and analysed from initial semi-structured pilot interviews, it became apparent that respondents were also referring to mandatory continuing professional development (CPD) requirements, in some cases for professional registration. The core learning contexts then became contexts of work, academy and profession, outlined in Chapter 1, section 1.7. Initial interview questions devised around 'work' and 'academy' were adjusted to include 'profession'; these amended questions were detailed in Table 8 in this chapter.

In a third modification to the original proposal, limitations of using Engeström's (2001, 2009) cultural historical activity theory as a framework for inductive data collection and analysis became apparent, in two ways. First, it seemed that using the key elements of the activity system to structure the interview questions could become a process of evaluating the effectiveness of the framework, which was not an intention of the research. Second, this approach might lead to collection of data that specifically corresponded to Engeström's (2001) activity system elements, without questioning whether or not these were the right themes. As an alternative, in devising the research methodology for the study, an alignment between a constructionist ontological perspective (Bryman, 2008); an interpretative epistemology (Guba and Lincoln, 1994), and the selection of a constructivist grounded theory

method (Charmaz, 2014) for the study became apparent. It was decided to abandon Engeström's activity system as a framework for thematic analysis, and instead adopt a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) as a primary research method. This change complied with Grix's (2004) proposal, outlined in section 5.1, in that a constructionist ontological perspective has informed an interpretative epistemological viewpoint, which in turn underpinned the selection of grounded theory research methodology as socially constructed, subjective and emergent.

With this latter amendment, rather than using one learning theory to structure the overall research analysis, the categories from initial interviews then informed research questions for the study. These categories were historical trends, motivations, characteristics, boundaries, outcomes, and ethical contributions of professional learning, described as an aim of 'common good'. The earlier literature informed research questions on the first three themes. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of socially constructed, mediated learning and Bateson's (1972) ideas of developmental emergence related to research questions about motivation and characteristics of continuing learning. Engeström's (2001) activity systems and expansive learning contributed to questions of boundaries and boundary crossing in continuing learning. Aristotle's ideas of experiential and deliberative learning towards *phronēsis* (Flyvbjerg, 2001) contributed to a question about necessary factors of ongoing learning for societal benefit. This change altered a two-stage interview process, which had originally proposed a first interview based on 'context questions' about the respondents' professional roles, responsibilities and career paths and 'boundary questions' about boundaries and synergies between learning through work and learning through study. This was to be followed by a second interview with each participant on 'concept' questions of 'contradiction, deliberation, collaboration and impact'. Although these categories had emerged from initial interviews, it was considered that these might present closed rather than open questions, and produce less individually determined data. As a result, the six emergent categories which underpin the present research questions were selected as core research topics and clustered in the aim of the research which was to determine purposes, processes and parameters of continuing learning for common good. In the next chapter, analysis and results of the first data set (DS1) of documents are presented.

## Chapter 6 Results of documentary data

This chapter presents the data from the undergraduate professional development programme documents, outlined in Chapter 5, section 5.6.1. The documentary data, described as Data Set 1 (DS1) are divided into two groups, as application statements (DS1a) and reflective accounts (DS1b). In the chapter, sections 6.1 and 6.2 set out the results of the two groups of data, following the grounded theory analysis process of open, axial and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) detailed in Chapter 5. Respondent indicators (described in Chapter 5, section 5.4.1) are given in relation to direct quotations from the data. A comparison of motivational factors in the two groups of documents is presented in section 6.3.

### 6.1 Application statements

This data responded to the research aims of determining purposes and processes of ongoing learning and to the specific question about motivation for academic study as continuing professional learning. In the application statements, work-based students were outlining reasons why they wanted to undertake the professional development degree as continuing professional learning. Using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) process of open, axial and selective coding, the key features of motivation, first identified through open coding of applicant documents, were clustered as axial categories and then coded selectively as 'putting learning to work'; 'building professional capacity'; 'ensuring quality'; 'extending personal capability' and 'crossing boundaries'. These stages of coding are summarised in Table 12. In the table, the term 'putting learning to work' represented motivation for learning as increasing knowledge and skills in order improve work, and thereby enhance the experience of participants or colleagues in the workplace. 'Building professional capacity' referred to learning which would extend the individual's professional practice, represented by goals of increased qualifications, job security and individual career progression. 'Ensuring quality' referred to an evaluative process of quality assurance or meeting professional standards. A selective category of 'extending personal capabilities' represented aims to increase personal transferable skills and abilities of confidence, insight and resilience in

managing self and change, as in the concept of 'graduate attributes' (Bowden et al., 2000; Barrie, 2006). The term 'crossing boundaries' indicated motivation factors which described congruence between work and study, in using processes of applied workplace research; studying topics of relevance to practitioners' roles and advancing knowledge and skills in aspects of work, or through validation of experience through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Crossing boundaries also referred to work-study-life balance, where a work-based mode of study was seen as congruent with personal or family life priorities.

Selective coding	Axial coding	Open coding	Frequency (n119)
Putting learning to work (47)	Extend knowledge and skills Researching practice	Occupation specific knowledge; legislation; leadership; management.	14
	Applied learning for benefit of service users and colleagues	Enhance client/student experience; working with/motivating/supporting.	13
	Leadership; learning organisation; links with other professionals	Applied leadership; creating interprofessional links; motivating others.	12
	Work/study link	Reflection; work underpins learning; research applied to work.	8
Building professional capacity (36)	Build on qualifications	Validation/endorsement of experience; academic qualification.	18
	Career progression	'Future proof' prospects; career progression; employability; wealth; employment security.	18
Extending personal capabilities (19)	Resilience; managing change; self-management; insight	Personal challenge; prove ability; confidence; allay fears; new insights; managing change, challenges.	19
Ensuring quality (5)	Quality assurance; meeting professional standards	Ensuring best practice; effective practitioner; meet highest standards; competence.	5
Crossing Boundaries (12)	Work/study/life balance	Choice of work based study balanced with home/family needs.	12

Table 12 Motivation categories (DS1a)

Although the study is not based on quantitative data, to gauge if one set of motivating factors was more important than another, an indication of the frequency of axial codes is given in Table 12. This suggested that 'putting learning to work' and 'enhancing professional capacity' were the most significant motivation factors for learning in this data, followed by 'extending personal capability'. In this group, crossing boundaries between work and

academic study was represented by indication that a work-based mode of study had been specifically selected. In addition, work-life balance was important for students, who indicated the significance to family life of a mode of study which could be carried out concurrently with work.

In the following sections, the key themes which emerged from data are discussed, using selective subheadings of 'putting learning to work'; 'building professional capacity'; 'ensuring quality'; 'extending personal capability' and 'crossing boundaries'. To illustrate these categories, examples of direct quotations are given.

#### 6.1.1 Putting learning to work

The idea of applied learning, or 'putting learning to work', follows Porritt's (2014:79) idea of 'putting knowledge to work', where motivation for learning aimed to benefit participants in services and work colleagues, rather than focus primarily on personal advantage. For this group of applicants, a primary motivation for study was to extend their knowledge and skills for the benefit of those they worked with, in applying their learning for 'the advancement of the cause', as one respondent put it.

I believe passionately in providing a quality experience for volunteers that meets organisational needs and ultimately contributes to the advancement of the cause (F/37/VS).

In this extract, the student explained her involvement in accreditation of 2000 volunteers across the UK, and that her learning would be applied as a cascade model (Kennedy, 2005), where learning carried out by one practitioner is passed on to other colleagues within the organisation. Another, working in the field of community engagement saw study as a means to expand practice by 'gaining ideas and tools to engage with hard-to-reach families' (F/36/PS). In further education, motivation for continued study was 'to adapt my teaching and delivery to aid students' (F/40/FE), or 'keeping my training up to date will benefit not only myself but also my students' (F/39/FE). Another believed 'that academic study can and should be a catalyst for change' (F/46/FE), indicating the transformative potential of learning; yet another saw the extended benefits of learning in fostering students as active citizens.

'I want students in my care to be confident individuals who are aware of the world around them and the impact they can make on society'. A student working in administration saw that specific skills would enhance not only her own work but also that of her team, in response to organisational goals: 'leadership and management strategies will assist me in my role which will have a positive effect on the team and support the organisation's priorities (F/42/SA).

These examples indicated that students were thinking about learning as a means of improving work of benefit to themselves, their service users, colleagues and organisation.

In public sector management, an applicant explained that as the workforce became more skilled and knowledgeable, as a manager, she had to extend her own learning.

I need to further my skills to support an increasingly skilled and qualified workforce. I hope to gain knowledge and skills to enable me to provide and enhanced service to those I support and advise (F/43/PS).

The latter example, in addition to supporting others, is representative of Bauman's (2008: 92) advice to practitioners to 'refresh their professional knowledge and...technical information, if they wish to avoid being thrown overboard'. In this situation, the idea of an 'increasingly skilled workforce' suggests that managers might need to update their qualifications to keep up with rates of change in the organisation where entrants have higher qualifications. In this respect, for experienced practitioners, study for a degree is less of an option and more of a requirement for job security or progression. In the voluntary sector, a manager saw her own study as a means of supporting volunteers in challenging situations and in strengthening their commitment to the organisation.

I would benefit and our volunteers would benefit, from learning more; I need to develop skills to keep volunteers committed and motivated ... I need to be exposed to different ways of doing this ... and how best to deal with more difficult situations' (F/38/VS).

Where this latter example concerns an applicant for academic study, the motivation and learning needs for skills could also be met by experiential learning, through mentoring by



senior staff or shadowing colleagues in other organisations. This indicated an expectation that new skills might be gained through study, as indicated by a public-sector practitioner: 'I hope to improve my skills to help me in the role I perform at present' (M/41/PS). In this section, motivation for learning focused on the practitioner improving their knowledge and skills and applying learning in the workplace for the benefit of others.

### 6.1.2 Building professional capacity

A second key motivation for study was the importance of gaining a qualification for career progression, either in applying for promotion, or as job security and to 'future-proof' employment prospects. As the programme of study was an undergraduate degree, this represented a step-up in qualifications to degree level, increasingly required by occupations as they became professions. For example, in further education, where previously extensive occupational experience had been required for teaching, a relevant degree had become the standard for promotion to a management post: 'I left school with very few qualifications, after serving my time as apprentice joiner and working with various firms...I feel this course will help me in my (present) role as lecturer and subject lead' (M/50/FE). In health and voluntary sectors, a similar situation of a need to upgrade qualifications was apparent: 'I don't have a formal qualification for the job I'm currently doing (F/40/HS); or 'I have no academic background and feel this has limited me' (M/36/VS). This motivation for study was identified as 'building professional capacity', interpreted as continuing professional learning as academic study which enabled practitioners to build on their experience in response to the changing requirements of the profession. In this respect, applicants were keen to ensure that their qualifications were sufficient for future career prospects. Practitioners who had joined emerging professions a time when a degree was not required, now found that their qualifications required updating for career progression, as in these examples: '(I am) unable to move to higher grade without qualification' (M/33/SA); 'I feel it is the right time to take my career to the next level and to enable me to do that I need a degree' (F/37/UA); 'a degree would be of great benefit to future career progression. Should a promoted post become available, I would be in a stronger position to apply' (F/49/PS). For some applicants, this qualification was selected both for career progression and as validation of experience.

Long term I see myself in a more senior position with a large staff team...this qualification will support me in my ongoing professional development, and stand as an endorsement of my professional expertise (F/37/VS).

'I have gained a lot of experience in teaching and dealing with people, now I am keen to progress to the next management level in my organisation (M/41/PS); 'I am applying to this programme to consolidate prior learning and experience, in addition to gaining knowledge and skills and developing my capacity'(F/43/PS). This was a position supported by several applicants' organisations, particularly those in stages of reform and change: 'the (organisation) now recognises the need to provide higher education for their managers, as the service moves towards reform (M/36/PS); 'I need to further my skills to support an increasingly skilled and qualified workforce' (F/43/PS).

### 6.1.3 Ensuring quality

Quality assurance of professional practice, making links between learning and standards was indicated as a motivating factor for study in a small number of responses, for example: '(I) believe passionately in quality experience for clients that...ensures what we are doing meets best practice and is of the highest standard' (F/37/VS). This idea related to increasing professional capacity, also to the earlier factor of applied learning, but used terminology of 'quality' 'priorities' and 'standards' which were apparent in professional policies (eg GTCS, 2012b; NMC, 2015). For a health sector practitioner, national policies and her role in promoting CPD on behalf of NHS Education for Scotland (NES) underpinned her rationale for study.

Within the NES, the aim is to produce best practice in education and lifelong learning through building workforce capacity for service improvement...to help provide better patient care...and educational support for national clinical priorities (F/36/HS).

Indicating the importance of continually updating knowledge, voluntary sector manager involved in structuring new schemes and practices indicated the importance of learning about new laws: 'the course will inspire me to research options and keep in touch with new legislation' (F/44/VS).

#### 6.1.4 Extending personal capability

A key feature of motivation was the extension of personal capabilities, such as resilience, managing change, insight or effectiveness. Resilience was identified as personal growth in aspects such as confidence and capability in managing challenges: 'I will be able to cope with and manage change' (M/39/FE), or to 'extend capability and enhance effectiveness and employability' (F/34/PS); for another, studying would enhance self-discipline', and 'provide an opportunity for self-development through new abilities and experiences' (F/49/PS).

Another explained

I am applying to this programme for my personal development...which will enable me to develop my skills and work more effectively (F/47/HS).

For a community worker, the prospect of study was to

further extend my knowledge, understanding and experience of engaging with communities...to validate the work I have already done, as well as give me new insights and broaden my perspectives' (F/40/PS).

A senior administrator explained that study would offer insight as well as career progression.

I feel that it is the right time to take my career to the next level and to do that I need a degree...I feel the programme will offer me a great deal of insight into my working practice (F/37/SA).

In a time of organisational change, learning was seen as a means of addressing challenges, for example in FE, where Scottish colleges were being merged.

Our college is undergoing a merger process, so we face new and unknown challenges ahead. This course will help me to cope with change and to assist others around me to do the same (M/39/FE).

For two applicants, learning for the sake of learning was indicated.

I enjoy learning and welcome the opportunity to be encouraged to reflect on and record things I have learned at different stages in my career (F/77/VS); education has always been of great interest to me (F/39/FE).

### 6.1.5 Crossing boundaries

In this data, boundaries were expressed as difference in contexts of work, study and home life. As a means of crossing boundaries between work and study, applicants explained the importance of being able to continue working while studying.

The course will complement work, and allow me to continue working on a full-time basis (M/45/SA); (the course will) encourage me to use my work as a learning environment (F/34/PS/3).

The latter applicant's use of the term 'learning environment' reflected Senge's (1990) concept of the learning organisation, where a culture of learning permeates the structures and processes of work. Links between work and academic study were also described as applied research and reflection on practice for the benefit of others, as in:

Previous study which involved reflection on my role and the impact on those I teach made me realise I wanted to engage in further study (F/41/FE).

An example of crossing of boundaries between workplace experiential learning and academic credentials was identified as Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), also termed Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This was described as

to consolidate prior learning and experience (F/37/SA); to validate the work I've already done (F/38/VS); I believe my combined thirty years in the industry and in FE would allow me to gain APEL in this programme (M/48/FE).

The latter candidate's length of experience in a trade and then in teaching meant that a programme which offered experiential accreditation was more relevant to his circumstances, than a programme which had, for example, expectations of the qualifications to enter study as might be required of school-leavers.

Two other kinds of crossing boundaries between work and study were mentioned in the applications, as geographical or emotional factors of separation. A benefit of crossing geographies was that learning could be enriched by linking practitioners from different settings: 'I'm particularly interested in this (course), as we will have the opportunity to work with professionals from all over Scotland' (F/36/PM). One applicant gave an indication of

boundary crossing from a culture of work to academic as 'fear': 'I hope to turn my fear of studying into my new goals' (F/37/SA). This aspect of challenge in academic work is explored in the next data, where examples of boundary crossing as ways of overcoming the 'stress' of studying are examined.

In boundary crossing expressed as maintaining work/life balance, applicants expressed concern about family needs as well as work and study commitments, as in; 'I am committing to study and maintaining a work/home life balance, while working as a manager'(M/36/PS/4). For some, reaching a particular stage of family life meant that study was more feasible, for example:

Although I have not studied for some time, my children are more independent and I now have time to commit to study on a part-time basis (M/45/SA); and

My youngest child is about to start primary school; this will allow me more time for focused independent study (F/46/FE).

In this data, motivation was geared towards academic study, with limited reference to professional CPD. In these documents, purposes of continuing learning were identified in order of significance as

- Putting learning to work (39)
- Building professional capacity (36)
- Extending personal capabilities (19)
- Ensuring quality (5)
- Work/life/study balance

In addition to these purposes, parameters identified as 'crossing boundaries' (12) described factors of work/life/study balance in this data.

The key purpose in this data, 'putting learning to work' linked to an altruistic motivation for learning of benefit to others (Koltko-Rivera, 2006; Pellegrino & Thomasma, 1993). Koltko-Rivera had argued that in self-actualisation the individual's motivation is towards realising their own potential, whereas altruistic motivation, (termed 'self-transcendence' by Koltko-Rivera) the individual's own needs were subsumed in the interests of others or of 'greater

good'. A further aspect of 'putting learning to work' noted in the data was motivating and supporting the learning of others, through aims of learning for leadership and of fostering the concept of a learning organisation (Senge, 1990).

The second most significant motivation in this data was described as 'building professional capacity', where applicants were concerned with advancing qualifications, ensuring job security and career progression. Ryan & Deci (2000) explained this form of motivation as extrinsic, and related to externally determined goals or reward. 'Ensuring quality', also related to extrinsic factors of directives and accounting for task performance, was less apparent in the data. A third key purpose, 'extending personal capabilities' represented an intrinsic motivation for learning as personal growth and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943, 1954; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In identifying learning processes, boundaries and boundary factors, students indicated a key benefit of work-based study as the potential to continue to earn a living while learning. In linking study to work, the concept of applied action research (Zubber-Skerritt, 1992; Reason & Bradbury, 2006) was represented as a means of boundary crossing between work and academy.

In the next data, where the documents concern reflection on completed study, the motivating factors described as 'putting learning to work'; 'building professional capacity'; 'ensuring quality'; 'extending personal capability' and 'crossing boundaries' are used as selective categories in a process of developing grounded theory. The categories form a basis of comparison to note any similarities or differences in the second data, and in addition allow any new categories to be determined.

## 6.2 Reflective accounts

In this section, the sample involved archived documents from the same undergraduate professional development programme as the previous data, although these reflective accounts were produced by a different group of students. From motivation for study at an application stage, in this second group of documents, the focus was reflection on completed study. Strauss & Corbin's (1998) process of open, axial and selective coding was applied to this group of documents, described as 'reflective accounts' (DS1b).

To build on and compare axial themes from the first set of documents, the selective categories of 'putting learning to work', building professional capacity', 'ensuring quality', 'extending personal capability' and 'crossing boundaries' were used as subheadings in relation to research questions concerning motivation for and outcomes of learning. This allowed themes to be expanded with the addition of further data, and to be compared with the motivations for learning described in application statements (Charmaz, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Comparison between motivation and outcomes of learning was also considered in this data.

### 6.2.1 Motivation

In the reflective accounts scrutinised, twenty-two students began by explaining their motivation for study, coded first into open categories, then as axial codes. These are detailed in Table 13 and listed in order of frequency.

Selective categories	Axial coding	Open coding	Frequency (n50)
Building professional capacity (22)	Academic credential	Qualifications; degree	16
	Career progression	For new job; promotion	6
Extending personal capabilities (15)	Personal resilience	Improve confidence; managing change	6
	Commitment to learning	Continuing learning	5
	Transferable skills	Reflection, inquiry	4
Putting learning to work (13)	Learning applied to work	Making a difference; transformation of others	4
	Knowledge and skills	Review and update professional knowledge, abilities	6
	Work/study link	Work-based course	3

Table 13 Motivation (DS1b)

In this coding, the main factor noted as motivation for study was gaining an academic qualification. For this group, most respondents had substantial work experience but no degree, and found themselves at a disadvantage in the workplace: 'I had many years of experience, but no third level qualification - how could I compete with others in the jobs market?' (M/Pr/3). The achievement of a degree was indicated by sixteen respondents, eight of whom indicated the importance of building on previous study towards a degree. For some,

studying for a degree had been progressive and a long-term ambition: 'as someone who was unable to attend University as a young person due to family circumstances... I now feel very privileged to be studying at degree level; personally, I have fulfilled a 47-year ambition' (F/FE/5); or 'after working my way through several levels of education, I finally reached my goal and started the degree' (F/H/9). For career progression, some gave specific areas of work: 'aim of new career in training and consultancy' (M/PS/10); 'to have a teaching career in further education, a degree is very relevant' (F/FE/9). Others noted that study was an advantage in seeking further employment: 'as evidence of return to study for future employers' (M/PS/7); 'degree would enhance professional and career aspirations' (M/FE/7).

The selective category of 'extending personal capabilities' was next in importance for this group. Motivation for learning as personal resilience was indicated as growth, confidence building or in seeking new challenges: 'I found myself feeling stagnant and wanting to enhance my abilities and apply my mind to a new challenge' (F/VS/2). Achieving transferable, generic skills, identified as self-management and reflection on and in practice (Schön, 1983), were a motivation for this group.

'Putting learning to work' was next in order of priority as motivation for learning. This included motivation for developing knowledge and skills for work, described in terms of renewal and keeping up to date: 'reviewing and updating professional knowledge, abilities and skills' and where 'knowledge needs to be recent and relevant' (M/PS/10). For some, learning motivation for work was in response to change, such as an increased administrative focus in work: 'over the years my job role has changed, becoming less hands-on and more focused on paper work, reports, reviews and assessments. This course would be a challenge, an opportunity to engage in something new' (F/H/1). In this group, outcomes of learning were also described, and to organise these factors the same selective categories have been applied.

### 6.2.2 Outcomes

The second aspect of data derived from the reflective accounts concerned outcomes of learning. In Table 14, expanding on the motivational selective categories, aspects of personal, workplace and professional capacity building were apparent as key outcomes.



Selective coding	Axial coding	Frequency (n116)
Extending personal capabilities (58)	Insight/understanding	23
	Reflection/critical thinking	12
	Confidence/self-belief	9
	Transferable skills	8
	Personal achievement	3
	Responsibility	3
Putting learning to work (44)	Applied research	11
	Knowledge and skills	10
	Organisational change	10
	Change for colleagues/clients	9
	Dissemination of research	4
Building professional capacity (14)	Further study	7
	Career development/new job	7

Table 14 Outcomes (DS1b)

In this data, 'extending personal capabilities' was most significant for students, where increased understanding and insight had the highest level of incidence. This involved understanding of professional concerns or about organisational systems; an ability to link theory to practice, and self-insight. Examples in the data included: '(I had) better understanding of problems and how to put new information into context' (M/PS/10); '(I) gained insight into self and others; (I have) greater understanding, (am) more aware of organisational structure, insight into how it worked' (F/PS/1), and '(I had) rewarding insights into areas of development; increased knowledge, skills, experience, better understanding, personal development and reflective practice (M/PS/12). Ongoing learning provided increased students' confidence and ability to achieve personal and professional goals: '(the course) has rejuvenated me in many ways, (it has) given me focus and self-belief and made me more determined than ever to obtain my goals' (M/Pr/3); 'self-management was life changing and career enhancing, (I was) able to set goals and enhance (my) responsibility' (M/PS/7).

Abilities to apply reflective thinking to practice featured as an outcome for several students, for example: 'in reflective practice, I encountered what Schön (1987:6): refers to as "indeterminate zones of practice characterised by uncertainty, uniqueness and value conflict, and there are no clear-cut ways of proceeding". I realised that reflection in action is an ideal way of making a difference to the situation in hand; my aim is to focus on achievements through active reflective practice' (M/FE/6); '(I am) using reflective practice to enhance self-

development; (I) gained valuable skills & knowledge which will improve (my) effectiveness & ability in professional setting' (M/PS/9).

Outcomes of study which represented 'putting learning to work' were indicated as change for colleagues, clients and for the organisation, exemplified by dissemination and application of research: '(I) delivered findings through presentation to line managers, other trainers, research participants. I was given permission to deliver training based on research; and course was amended to include research recommendations' (M/PS/8). '(I) was involved in change process as researcher attached to review team; the (degree) enhanced knowledge of project planning and management, and research skills. Applied skills from research to forensics project' (M/PS/9). 'Some of recommendations have already commenced; a completed report was submitted to head of specialist training; will also be made available to (professional improvement agency) and for publication in specialist journals' (M/PS/12). For an FE lecturer, applied research gave insight into ways to improve working with students: '(the) study will be disseminated to management team and quality assurance team. Research gave unanticipated realisation that real problem concerned pedagogy rather than administration; it allowed me to see interconnection between seemingly unrelated strands in effort to better understand how to serve our learners' (M/FE/3).

For a work-based student involved in managing childcare, learning was applied to responding to government strategic policy, as well as to supporting colleagues in keeping up to date with relevant issues. 'I am in a position to influence change, and have been approached to assist colleagues with (area's) response to Scottish Government extension of childcare. (I) plan to share research with colleagues; raising awareness from different perspectives, sharing & explaining findings can reinforce learning & keep current issues on the agenda for discussion. I feel confident in discuss, share and debate issues from knowledge gained through data; (study) has kept me up to date with current local & national publications' (F/PS/13).

From these sets of examples, it was possible to establish that motivation for and outcomes of learning could share the same categories of extending personal and professional capabilities, and of applying learning to work. In comparing motivation with outcomes in the

reflective accounts, the main difference was in order of significance of these categories, set out in Table 15. This indicates a change from a starting point where students were mainly interested in gaining an academic qualification for professional status and career progression, to a position of recognising outcomes of personal and transferable skills, followed closely by 'putting learning to work'. Accepting that a numerical comparison cannot be made as not all reflective accounts included reference to motivation, it was nonetheless interesting to note the change from the requirement of a qualification for career development as an aspect of credentialism (Brown et al., 1997; Collins, 1994) to the notion of achieving personal transferable knowledge skills as graduate attributes (Bowden et al., 2000; Barrie, 2006), and applied research for the benefit of others (Dixon, 2000; Senge, 1990). In this data, there was no specific reference to meeting professional standards, either as a motivating factor for, or as an outcome of, academic study.

In Table 15, these changes from motivation to outcomes could be indicative of a move from emersion in an academic activity system (Engeström, 2009) where the required outcome is to achieve the degree, to a consideration of the workplace as a different activity system.

Motivation (DS1b) (n50)	Outcomes (DS1b) (n116)
Building professional capacity (22)	Extending personal capabilities (58)
Extending personal capabilities (15)	Putting learning to work (44)
Putting learning to work (13)	Building professional capacity (14)

Table 15 Comparison between motivation and outcomes (DS1b)

This transition in context would involve thinking about ways in which the practitioner as learner has changed, and ways in which the learning can be applied and shared with others in the workplace.

### 6.2.3 Boundaries

In this section, boundaries between activity systems of work and academic contexts were represented by a range of factors which have been grouped in order of significance as 'academic, personal and work' in Table 16. Concerns indicated as academic boundary factors included time away from study, lack of experience and uncertainty about academic processes, levels or terminologies. '(I) felt somewhat 'rusty' academically, had never fully

undertaken an inquiry to this level or detail before' (F/FE/1); '(I had) not engaged with disciplined study for several years and never at such a high level; (I) was intimidated by some study; since leaving further education 16 years ago, it would be fair to say I am somewhat institutionalised in my thinking and not used to some of the terminology' (M/PS/11).

For two students, IT skills were a problem: 'as a mature student who had not engaged with academic study for 20 years, the first module was very challenging. I struggled with my confidence and lack of IT skills. (F/H/4); and 'the biggest challenge I encountered was my lack of competency in the use of computer technology' (F/H/7/PT). For a private sector student, planning work-based research and researching relevant academic literature were time consuming and stressful, leading to a work/life/study imbalance.

(the) process of planning was stressful; (I) was concerned about potential lack of relevant material(s). (I) spent an inordinate amount of time researching literature which gave me an unwieldy amount of information to sift through...(It) was difficult to balance my professional, home life and academic commitments' (F/PrS/1).

As a mature student who had not engaged with academic study for 20 years, the first module was very challenging. I struggled with my confidence and lack of IT skills. (F/H/4) 'Personal' concerns about learning were described as stress, fear, worry, anxiety, mental blocks or lack of confidence, as emotional challenges about undertaking academic study. Examples of these concerns included seeing study as an overwhelming challenge: 'it was a chore; so broad it frightened me. I felt lost; outside my comfort zone, (I had) personal mental blocks and frustrations of time commitments' (F/PS/1). One student indicated a series of tensions about undertaking work-based research: '(I was) concerned about organising (research); (the) stress; time pressures; anxiety; relief when (it was) complete' (F/PS/4P).

Boundary factors which related to work included limited academic literature in specific professional fields; the researcher's status in an organisation, and limited priority afforded to learning. These are detailed in Table 16 as academic, personal and work factors.

Selective coding	Axial coding	Frequency (n72)
Academic factors (39)	Level of study/time since last studied	9
	Access to resources	5
	Access to research participants	9
	Lack of experience in research	7
	Academic terminology/level of study	9
Personal factors (23)	Stress/anxiety/fear/lack of confidence	10
	Mental blocks/challenge	7
	Personal/family commitments	6
Work factors (10)	Work commitments/work/life balance	10

Table 16 Boundary factors (DS1b)

As an example of boundary factors between work and study, a public service student indicated that 'data collection with (senior management) was challenging, the difficulties I encountered may have related to their perception of me and my status in the organisation; (limited) priority was given to research, particularly at time when the service was going through major transformation (M/PS/3).

#### 6.2.4 Crossing boundaries

In the next part of this section, the term 'facilitating boundary crossing' was used to describe factors in the reflective accounts which helped to address the concerns expressed as boundaries in continuing learning. These responses indicated that interpersonal support from others was the most significant factor in facilitating continuing learning. Whereas this could also be termed a characteristic of learning, for this data, the relevance of support from different people in relation to crossing boundaries between academic study, work and home life is detailed in Table 17.

Selective coding	Axial coding	Frequency (n30)
Interpersonal support	Tutors	11
	Work colleagues	6
	Managers	6
	Other students	6
	Family	5
	Clients/participants	2

Table 17 Facilitating boundary crossing (DS1b)

In the application statements, a work/study/life balance was indicated as a necessary factor of synergies between contexts. In this set of data, where this concept was not specifically

mentioned, it was reflected in sources of support which represented academy, work and home life. As interpersonal support, academic tutors were identified as most significant, followed by colleagues and managers, then other learners. Tutors were described as open and understanding, ensuring that students were able to negotiate learning contexts of academy and work: 'approachable, empathetic and understanding tutors who gave me much support and encouragement; without their compassion and patience, module would not be completed' (F/VS/2). 'Great support network of (profession) tutors & supervisors (M/PS/11); 'support and guidance from the tutors gently nudging you in the right direction' (M/FE/7).

For some students, support from family, tutors and fellow students was combined in importance, enabling a challenging period of work and study to be completed. Some examples are given below.

'(I had) great family support from my husband and children and from my tutor. I am grateful to her for time, interest in me, advice, support and encouragement' (F/VS/1); 'I will be eternally grateful to my fellow students and tutors alike. Encouragement and support has come from my wife, from friends and colleagues, my daughters who taught me computer skills, and my tutor who helped me get over the 'wall' (M/Pr/3). 'With help and support from my work colleagues and family members, I got there. Support I received from my Mum alone was the reason I got to the final stage' (F/H/1), and 'Without support of my tutor, line manager and my family, completing this (course) would not have been possible' (M/PS/6).

Learning with peers was noted as a positive experience of learning through discussion and exchange of ideas, particularly meeting in a classroom location:

I prefer (a) classroom arena where interaction between students and tutors enhances learning and allows for greater sharing of ideas and opinions; greater opportunity for group bonding and meetings to air concerns about understanding course content and to (engage in) group discussion' (F/PS/4).

Conversely, online peer communication was described by the same participant as a less supportive experience, where she indicated that: '(online study) was very isolating; no

human contact; discussions were unnatural and (relied) on other class members being online at same time' (F/PS/4). Although some learners had online-only access due to their geographical location, this did not feature in responses, other than for one student who lived in a remote location in Africa with limited access to the internet: 'I have ongoing problems in that I live in the zone with limited electricity supply, no internet access and shortage of transport to the central zone (M/H/6). For this student, study workshops and phone communication provided essential support: 'things became ok when I started communicating with my colleagues and members of the (training) unit' (M/H/6).

As one student commented that managers had a role to play in ensuring that reflective learning was supported, towards a goal of mentoring and supporting colleagues: '(I) believe for reflective practice to be successful, it requires skilled support and a positive attitude from management that ensures individuals are confident to develop their artistry and mentor others' (M/PS/12). This indicated the important role managers and senior colleagues have in supporting learning in a range of ways, for example being skilled in the art of mentoring and coaching staff as learners, and encouraging learners to share their learning with others.

In the next section, comparisons between two groups of documents are made, and the findings of the documentary data are reported.

### 6.3 Findings of documentary data

From analysis of the documentary data, findings are reported in relation to the relevant research questions. These represent part of the process of developing grounded theory from data, and as such findings are presented as selective categories which were developed further in relation to data from the semi-structured interviews, reported in the next chapter.

The main research questions for this data concerned motivation for study, outcomes of learning and learning approaches which facilitated boundary crossing between work and study. With regard to the learning contexts and characteristics of learning, these documents were related to academic study as a work-based undergraduate programme, delivered through blended learning approaches of study workshops, online learning materials and

individualised tutor support. The main focus of the programme of study was applied action research (Reason & Bradbury, 2006).

To report findings, comparisons were drawn between the two sets of documentary data to identify any similarities. Although the documentary data involved different sample sizes and stages in learning, it was possible to compare motivational selective categories in the first and second groups of data, and to report overall findings from both groups. Across the two groups, there were similarities in three categories, but with changes in the priority of categories. For example, the theme of quality assurance in the first group (DS1a) was not mentioned in the second data group (DS1b). Selective categories in the two groups of documentary data are set out in comparison in Table 18.

DS1a Application statements (n119)	DS1b Reflective accounts (n50)
Putting learning to work (47)	Building professional capacity (22)
Building professional capacity (36)	Extending personal capabilities (15)
Extending personal capabilities (19)	Putting learning to work (13)
Ensuring quality (5)	

Table 18 Motivation: Comparison of motivation in DS1a & DS1b

In this comparison, selective categories of 'putting learning to work', 'building professional capacity', 'extending personal capabilities' and 'ensuring quality' were noted in the application statements. At the application stage, learners seemed more concerned with their effective practice for the benefit of the profession, and less concerned about individual academic achievement. Quality assurance, which featured in the application documents, with learning aims of best practice and to meet professional standards, was not evident in the reflective accounts. In the second documents where students had completed academic study, responses indicated a move from initial altruist motivation to an extrinsic reward of achieving academic accreditation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). 'Building personal capacity' as intrinsic motivation for learning (Maslow, 1943, 1954), was less important in the applicant group as a motivation, but significant as an outcome in the reflective accounts. A key change from the first to the second set of documents was that motivation for applied learning for the benefit of others moved from a position of most to least significant. This suggests that where students' interests were located in a work-oriented activity system (Engeström, 2009), responses reflected the collaborative processes and principles of work. After studying for a degree,



respondents' views reflected an academic activity system where the required outcome was to achieve an individual accreditation. This was balanced by increased significance of personal capacity after study, which reflected the idea of graduate attributes (Barrie, 2006) as an outcome of study. The category of interpersonal support, noted in this data as a means of crossing boundaries between contexts, was relevant to the reflective accounts (DS1b). In these documents, completing students reflected on their learning journeys, on challenging aspects of their studies, and what factors helped them to achieve their goals. The significance of mediated support from tutors, managers, work colleagues, family and other students was noted as particularly relevant in this data. This reflected Vygotsky's (1978:86) idea of learning as socially constructed through situated mediation, and Wertsch's (2007) implicit and explicit mediation as communicative action. Vygotsky's (1978) 'zone of proximal development', as the difference between what a learner might achieve alone and what could be achieved with the help of others relates to this finding. In Vygotsky's construct, 'more capable others', in this case, tutors, mentors and colleagues, assist learners to identify, set and achieve appropriate learning goals. In Vygotsky's proposal that learning is socially constructed, he argued that what is learned interpersonally through communicative dialogue of social interaction could then be internalised intrapersonally by the individual in individual decision making. Vygotsky's argument indicates limitations of individual reflection as a primary means of experiential learning. Instead, dialogue with a more capable other or others, as interpersonal critical reflective analysis of a situation, is proposed as a necessary precursor to individual intrapersonal learning.

Next, the data analysis results from semi-structured interviews with continuing learning practitioners from four Scottish professions are presented, building on categories and comparisons made in this chapter.

## Chapter 7 Results of interview data

In this chapter, the results of analysis of semi-structured interviews are presented. As in Chapter 6, a process of coding open, axial and selective categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) was used to organise and analyse data. Selective categories drawn from Chapter 6 are used as a basis of comparison with interview data, in order to build on these categories where relevant, and add new categories in a process of developing grounded theory. In the chapter, responses are reported by profession in four sections, as community education (7.1), education (7.2), nursing (7.3) and social work (7.4). The chapter concludes in section 7.5 with the results of a general NVivo text query across all interviews, which indicated significant use of the terms 'work', 'think' and 'learn'.

The responses of twelve interview participants are reported as short accounts of their continuing learning experiences in relation to the research questions which concern motivations, outcomes, characteristics, boundaries and synergies. Where relevant for each respondent, continuing learning is described as academic study, as workplace learning and as professional CPD. In reporting the data, a 'thick description' approach to reporting unique experiences, contexts and perspectives of participants was used, following Ponterotto's (2006) recommendation of using short and long quoted excerpts from transcribed interviews to ensure that each participant's voice is presented, and that the reader can identify analytical categories with the data. To ensure anonymity, each participant was given an assumed name, based on the initials allocated alphabetically in Table 10. Quotations from interviews are identified by the relevant initial and NVivo line codes, as indicated in Chapter 5, section 5.4.3.

First, the results of community education interviews are reported.

## 7.1 Community Education

Of the three community education participants, two had been employed as managers of community-based health projects and a third had worked in events management and adult literacy. Two had undertaken Master's level study in the workplace; a third had studied for a part-time Master's degree which led to part-time employment in the university and to doctoral study. All three had gone on to become full or part-time lecturers in higher education. A second participant had enrolled for PhD study on becoming a lecturer. At the time of the study (2015), professional registration with the CLD Council was in development, but not mandatory. Two of the interviewees were registered members and held committee roles with the organisation. In this group, two were female and one male, aged from 45 - 55. Respondents were identified by the initials A, B and C, and were given assumed names of Anna, Beth and Chris.

### 7.1.1 Anna

Anna talked about her experience of work-based academic study in two settings, one with a community-based women's health project and second, as a lecturer in higher education. She described her motivation for academic study in these two situations as developing specialist knowledge and expertise to meet the challenges of new employment. In her first job, the project's therapeutic approach led Anna to study for a specialist qualification. Her manager had encouraged this, although funding was not provided.

At that time the drive of the project was person-centred therapy, and I felt I needed to be qualified to do that. It was also the influence of the manager and her thinking about what the job required. I embarked on part-time study over about three years; apart from some money from a trust fund, I didn't get funding; I had to pay for it myself. (A/19-21)

Learning boundaries were apparent for Anna where work and study were initially linked and then separated. The division had led to independent study at home, where she described maintaining a work-study-life balance as 'exhausting'.

While I was doing (the study), I became the manager, and the focus of the project changed. That created boundary issues and dilemmas, because I felt that it wasn't appropriate for me to work with women in counselling relationships, when I also worked with them doing campaigning work. It created an ethical and moral dilemma; I had to do the therapeutic role elsewhere because I still wanted to finish my qualification. When it was right for the job, it was quite easy, but when it became not right, I couldn't do it, I had to separate it out. It became a lot of work, it was exhausting actually, in addition to a full-time job. (A/53-55)

As an outcome, this credential became part of a 'package of qualifications' which allowed Anna to progress to a senior post in health education, then into higher education. In this way, additional study led to career progression, although this had not been her initial aim. A further outcome was that knowledge and skills from this course had stayed with Anna, and as personal capabilities, were transferable across contexts.

What it gave me still runs through everything I do. It helped me to be stronger and more focused in my thinking, it gave me empathic abilities, and congruence, helped me think about elegant challenging and all the kind of those kind of key things about being a community worker in terms of relationship building. (A/25)

In this situation, crossing boundaries for Anna involved forging close links between work and study, indicated by her comment that 'what drives you to get into the study, and what relevance it has to the workplace, is really important'. (A/19)

In a second situation of higher education, as a new lecturer Anna was required to complete a module involving specialist knowledge and skills in teaching. Motivation in this situation was an employer-funded requirement. The course was relevant to Anna's work and helped her to think critically about her practice, so she selected to complete the whole certificate to enhance her personal capabilities in carrying out her role.

You have to do it as part of your induction time, which I did, and I decided to do the whole certificate. It wasn't necessary - but I felt it would be supportive, challenging, and important for me to really think about my role. (A/46)

Anna described work-related applied learning as an important synergy between work and study, with outcomes of enhancing transferable knowledge and skills, and her personal capabilities.

I would say that that one was completely grounded and connected to my job, and it helped me really grow and develop. Doing it forced me to reflect on my teaching and scholarship, develop it, expand it, evaluate it and that was good. (A/81-82)

In the latter situation, the opportunity to extend specialist work-related learning moved from employer-led workforce development to intrinsic, enhancing personal capabilities.

In describing characteristics of her learning, Anna's experience was mainly independent study. She explained limitations of opportunities for 'shared learning' with colleagues.

I don't think as a team we share very well, our philosophies, our theories, our practices in terms of academia, or teaching or scholarship, I think there were things I could have shared a bit more; there was informal sharing but with peers, colleagues I'm more close to. (A/104)

Although reason for these limitations, which might involve time or structured opportunities, were not investigated, the term 'informal sharing' suggested conversation with trusted colleagues as non-structured workplace learning.

With regard to professional CPD, as membership of the professional organisation was not compulsory at that time, Anna had initially selected not to register with the CLDSC, but felt coerced into doing so.

I don't have to (register), but eventually I decided to do it because of pressure from (the workplace) ...so for career development, I needed to play the game. (A/103)

This meant that although neither registration nor CPD were mandatory, peer pressure suggested that not joining might be somehow 'unprofessional'. Having moved into higher education, Anna saw learning associated with that field as more relevant to her professional development. For example, she expressed an interest in becoming a fellow of the Higher Education Academy, explaining that: 'it seems more genuine CPD; it's the gold standard for

higher education' (A/104). This indicated a boundary between the profession and work, which in this case was teaching profession's required qualification in higher education.

In a second study context, as a new lecturer, Anna had the opportunity to pursue doctoral study, funded by her university. Motivation in this case was the potential to 'make a difference' through research.

There's quite a push for us to get PhD Level qualifications and I'm totally inspired by doing it, I love having the opportunity, it's brilliant that they're supporting and funding us. It completely connects to my work and without a doubt it has developed me as an academic; it's just incredibly stressful because of time. More than ever I'm finding it really hard, it's really challenging, not getting the time and space to do my doctoral studies, because the working day is so, so busy. And then I do study at home, I'm doing it at six o'clock in the morning, I'm doing it at weekends sometimes – not always, because I've got young kids – so it's this kind of intense struggle, it feels incredibly stressful. (A/98-99)

Anna was also aware that the university had funding and research targets which put pressure on staff to complete doctorates in a limited timescale. When I asked Anna if doctoral study was a requirement of the job, she considered that it was, and that expectations for completion of study added pressures to an already demanding job.

I feel that – yes. In this job, I have to do it. I also want to do it, but it's the 'having to' do it that really stresses me. And at a staff meeting, there was a thing on the discussions board that said 'how can we ensure that staff are quicker at getting their doctorates?' So, it's that speed, that pressure that feels really difficult. I think the culture needs to change, if they're absolutely serious about research, then give us proper time to do it. When they put that notice up saying "how can we speed this up?" one of the things I put up was sabbaticals. That's exactly what I need.

(A/100-101)

In Anna's account, a range of motivations for continuing learning as academic study were described at different stages in her career. An aim of acquiring specialist knowledge and skills featured in connection with starting new jobs, and employer-funded workforce development linked to Anna's move to work in higher education. In relation to doctoral study, Anna described a combination of motivational factors as an intrinsic desire to study, extrinsic employer funding and expectations and an altruistic aim of making a difference. Outcomes of ongoing learning as study for Anna were transferable skills, adding to a 'package of qualifications', career progression and further study. Characteristics of Anna's learning were independent home-based study, critical reflection, informal shared learning and work-related applied study. Boundaries were apparent for Anna between work and study in her first example, where specialist knowledge was unique to a particular workplace context, and between work, study and home, where work-related study impacted on Anna's home life. With regard to professional CPD, Anna noted a disconnection between work, learning and the profession. Synergies in Anna's examples were the application of learning to work, and her proposal of sufficient resources to ensure a work/life balance, particularly in terms of time for study. Factors drawn from the documents in Data Set 1 which were not mentioned in Anna's account included collaborative learning (other than on an informal basis), support from colleagues or peers, or the significance of a tutor, mentor or supervisor in guiding and supporting her learning. This did not suggest that these factors might not be important to Anna, merely that they did not feature in this interview.

Next, Beth's account focuses on an example of continuing learning as crossing boundaries between work and study.

### 7.1.2 Beth

Beth worked part-time with a local authority, and part-time with a Scottish university. She had undertaken Master's study, a series of other short accredited and non-accredited courses and was in the process of completing a doctorate. Beth's motivation for Master's study had been initially to refresh and update her knowledge, after a break from work.

I was concerned that having stepped out of the workplace for 5 years, people would think, “well, what do you know about this?” So, when I started to do my Master’s, I was just making sure that my knowledge of the field was back up to scratch. (B/179)

From her involvement in this study, Beth was employed as a part-time lecturer, which gave her the opportunity of employer funding for doctoral study. Beth described her motivation as ‘pragmatic’, where employer support for study would enable Beth to gain the additional qualifications she needed for career progression to full-time teaching in higher education.

Thinking about the PhD as an example, starting to do it was partly pragmatic, because my department was funding it, and partly because I thought I’m going nowhere unless I get that accreditation - universities are not employing people unless they have PhDs now. It doesn’t matter how good a teacher I am, what universities value is PhDs, and the whole research thing - if you don’t have that, you’re going nowhere. So, it was about finding permanency, it was about job security. (B/159)

Beth described the outcomes of her study as gaining more qualifications, career progression; and as a growth in understanding, confidence and competence.

I feel much more confident in my knowledge about things in a way that I wasn’t before. In terms of knowledge and understanding, I feel quite competent, in being able to say I can do my job well, I know what I’m doing, I understand it, and I’m making informed choices about what I do and how I understand things. (B/183)

Asked about crossing boundaries, Beth explained that while material boundaries between locations of her work and study existed, this had not created any problems; instead she saw the two contexts as interlinked.

In terms of my local authority work and academic learning, there were physical boundaries about when you did it and who paid for it, but there weren’t any boundaries in the learning that I did. My PhD was informed by my practical work, and my learning informed the practical work, so they were intertwined. Only in an administrative, managerial sense, were they separate (B/160).



With flexible working hours, she was able to interchange time for work and for study, although she did think that study was mainly carried out in her own time. She saw this latter point as a contradiction to some extent, in that workplace seemingly did not allow time for study, but advanced qualifications of staff were used to raise the profile of the workforce organisation:

(In work), I did it 'under the radar' kind of thing, it wasn't sanctioned. Although once you've got the accreditation then it becomes a different thing. It suddenly becomes very important. So they might be saying, "you can't do this in work time", but then when you get your PhD, they're very quick to stick it on CVs and so on, because that gives kudos to the organisation. It increases their credibility, even though they might have said, "we're not giving you the time". (B/169)

As characteristics of learning in work, Beth explained her approach to workplace learning as individual reflection on experience: 'I think it's about having to find out things for yourself, like discovering and learning as you went along' (B/146), and 'I learn by doing; I'll reflect on a practical project and how I'll do the project again' (B/151). In Beth's account, as in Anna's, there was limited description of collective or participatory learning. Academic learning was described mainly as individual, independent study, carried out at home.

Individualism was again reflected in Beth's description of the characteristics of professional CPD: 'in the Standards Council CPD strategy, the idea is that each individual has ownership of their own CPD, and they take it through their career' (B/175). As a boundary factor, Beth explained that the individual ownership of CPD fostered by the professional agency was providing a contradiction for employers, with regard to financial support for academic study. If employers did support study as CPD, Beth explained, the practitioner might take advantage of the funding, and on completion of the qualification, move to another job. As a result, Beth suggested that employers would say "we're not going to invest, CPD is your responsibility". On the other hand, if employers did not fund study, there could be accusations of insufficient support for workforce development. Beth proposed that CPD provision devised in partnership between employers and providers could address this problem.

In Beth's account, motivations for continued learning as study were updating knowledge and skills and 'pragmatic' motivation in response to employer-funded doctoral study, towards career progression. As Beth had planned specific outcomes for her study, these were achieved as additional qualifications, advancing her career, with transferable skills and personal capabilities of increased confidence and competence. Characteristics of ongoing learning were independent study, reflective learning and workplace-applied learning. Synergy between two learning contexts of work and academy was reflected in Beth's part-time employment in two settings. She considered that boundaries between contexts were administrative, although Beth's description of work-related study as 'under the radar' indicated some division between personal and professional use of time. As a profession-study boundary, Beth voiced a concern that where employer-supported academic study routinely led to career progression, this was of benefit to individuals but could potentially destabilise workforce development. As proposed synergy between work, study and profession in connection with professional CPD, Beth suggested that providers and employers needed to work more closely together in planning, implementing and evaluating continuing learning provision.

A further example of synergy between work and study is given next, in Chris's experience of using an action research approach in Master's study.

### 7.1.3 Chris

Chris was manager of an inter-professional community-based organisation, with responsibility for a team of staff. For Chris, motivation for continuing learning as academic study stemmed initially from employer-funded workforce development and a workplace learning culture: 'there was a lot of support to train further, to develop knowledge, skills, abilities' (C/206). Chris first took a specialist accredited module with the university, then continued study by updating his qualifying diploma to an undergraduate degree, then to a Master's degree. He explained that where study was funded, he felt a drive to 'make the most of it', and move on to the next academic stage. Beth's description of 'pragmatic' motivation. As part of Master's study, his motivation extended to aims of putting learning to

work, and making a difference through participative action research. He stressed his aims to integrate his study with work, and through action research, 'make it useful'.

Chris described the characteristics of his study as encouraging a collective, reflective learning culture which aimed to benefit the organisation as a whole, following the professional principles of 'inclusion, empowerment and working collaboratively' (CLDSCS, 2009).

The focus on the learning organisation, the culture, the shared values, the motivation for people was genuine. We were trying to develop a culture to look underneath what was going on, do a bit of reflective analysis, and people were buying into that. Definitely I was really keen to make the study, the action research, to make it applicable, to make it useful, to integrate things. (C/224)

Chris explained a dilemma about product and process outcomes of the research. For the workplace, this involved a continuing, collaborative, dialogical process, whereas the product of an individual dissertation which met prescribed academic criteria was required for the university. This dilemma was resolved by creating two product outputs, one which met the academic requirements, and a learning agreement drawn up by staff which met the needs of the organisation. Chris explained the latter as a 'contract' to which everyone in the organisation was invited to contribute and sign up to. He stressed the collaborative approach embedded in his research, arguing that action research was an ongoing process, which might involve a series of developmental products.

We developed a contract with management, staff and volunteers that was around the culture, the shared values, and the kind of negotiable skills of how we worked with people and each other. It turned into a document that was part of staff training, development, induction...it was something that people could sign up to, or adapt, move forward. (C/264)

The separation of material outcomes for work and study suggested examples of Vygotsky's (1978) mediating artefacts for learning, located in Engeström's (2001) idea of cultural-

historical activity systems. As a further boundary concept, Chris considered that separation between study and work was a form of cultural conditioning.

We're almost programmed to separate academic study from everyday working life. I think it took me some time to really integrate the study with my practice. I think we need to separate it because of the work ethic, or because the workforce mind is so geared towards tacit knowledge and not academic knowledge (C/ 215).

This related to Engeström's (2001) ideas that groups of people foster rules, relationships and principles within specific activity systems. In Chris's account, he drew a distinction between participative, tacit learning (Polanyi, 1967) in the workplace, and acquired, theoretical knowledge (Piaget, 1978; Sfard, 1998) in the context of study.

In this situation, the longer-term outcomes for the organisation were central to the aims for the study. To achieve this, Chris's leadership role within the action research project were necessary factors for learning. Chris recognised that shared learning outcomes within the organisation would depend on forward planning:

I needed to have a clear idea of 'where am I taking this?' and of the longer-term influence on improving things and developing things. (C/266)

These indications of planning ahead, inclusion and leadership corresponded with Porritt's (2014) idea that strategic planning, focus and leadership are necessary factors in ensuring effective impact of professional learning and development. In this, Porritt explained that to achieve impact, anticipated and desired impact first had to be planned in terms of strategic focus, and second, in order to be realised, that strategic focus needed effective leadership.

Despite the integrated nature of the research approach, the academic requirements of study were carried out in Chris's personal time. At one stage, he explained that an imbalance between study, work and changing family relationships meant that study had to be put on hold for a few years.

I had to use personal time to carry out my studies; to attend workshops, to get to the library, to spend time on study - it was virtually impossible to do a lot of that in my

work time (C/234). Due to (family matters) I had to come off the Master's programme. But I went back on after two or three years (C/242).

This example suggested that despite a synergy between work and study, the demands of academic accreditation as independent home-based study could lead to a work/study/home imbalance.

With regard to professional CPD, although this was not yet mandatory in the field of community education, Chris explained that registration was under development by the Community Learning and Development Standards Council (CLDSC). This had been challenged by some practitioners, who saw the evidence-based CPD required for registration as a form of 'individualised professionalisation' (C/254), which contradicted principles of CLD as a collaborative and empowering profession. Chris explained the views of some fieldworkers in relation to these concerns.

On the negative side, there's been a number of people saying "we don't want to register, because it's going to force us as organisations or as individuals to have to spend time or money on CPD". It's this perception that CPD is something that is 'being done to people', it's part of a conspiracy to make their lives more difficult, and to professionalise their lives, in a way that means there's no ownership (C/256); there's always a danger of a competence list as a technical, boring experience of 'how can we justify this?' (C/322)

In using the Standards Council's 'i-develop portal' Chris explained that practice examples could be lodged and discussed online, and this could foster collaboration and shared learning. However, as access to the portal was restricted to those who had signed up for registration. Chris argued that this could lead to individualisation of participative community work.

The danger of individual professionalisation (is) fragmentation, in contexts where people are working collectively and collaboratively; it requires a real balancing act. (C/254)

As ways of crossing boundaries, Chris suggested leadership in channelling the potential for the online learning portal, and thinking about how this could be used in other ways such as widening access to accredited learning as 'pathways into education'. In this respect, two synergies between professional and workplace learning were proposed as leadership for learning, and pathways into education, in order to create stronger links between the profession and academy. In addition, Chris suggested a need for relationships to be fostered between academic researchers and communities.

We need to have more action research, we need to have more qualitative and rigorous research and we also need academia to recognise the work we're doing with people. (C/286)

In this response, Chris explained a need for research to be participative, with outcomes of process as well as product.

Chris's motivation for study had begun with employer funding and a learning culture for workforce development, moving to goals of specialist managerial knowledge and skills, and to update his qualifications. The selection of action research as a key characteristic of Master's study added motivations of 'putting learning to work' and 'making a difference'. Outcomes of study were Chris's development of his workplace as a learning organisation, new qualifications and career progression. Characteristics of his learning were participative action research, which included leading collaborative planning towards learning outcomes, and independent home-based study. The latter was a feature of an academy-workplace boundary which contributed to a work/study/life imbalance. Although professional CPD was not required, Chris described practitioner concerns of 'fragmented individual professionalisation', created by reductionist competency frameworks. He proposed leadership for learning and greater pathways to education as ways of crossing boundaries between work, profession and study.

#### 7.1.4 Community Education: comparison of themes

A summary of selective categories in the community education interviews is presented in Table 19, showing comparison between respondents' experiences of continuing learning in

contexts of work, profession and academy. In this section, three research aims of determining purposes, processes and parameters are used to group comparisons.

Motivation	Anna	Beth	Chris
Specialist knowledge and skills	•		•
Employer-funded	•	•	•
Intrinsic desire for learning	•		
Putting learning to work	•	•	•
Knowledge/qualification update		•	•
Career progression		•	
Learning for change			•
Outcomes			
Extending personal capabilities	•	•	•
Package of qualifications	•	•	•
Building professional capacity	•	•	•
Putting learning to work			•
Characteristics			
Work-related study	•	•	•
Critical reflection	•	•	•
Independent home-based study	•	•	•
Informal sharing	•		•
Learning for change			•
Learning communities			•
Professional competency framework		•	•
Boundaries			
Work-study disconnection	•		
Academy-profession division		•	•
Work-profession disassociation	•		•
Work-home-study imbalance	•		•
Synergies			
Working across contexts		•	
Putting learning to work	•	•	•
Profession-work CPD		•	•
Leadership for learning			•
Pathways into education			•
Learning/communities/networks			•
Profession-academy RPL			•
Learning for change			•

Table 19 Community education categories

Processes of continuing learning in this professional group were influenced by employer-led workforce development. An altruistic aim of learning, categorised as ‘putting learning to work’ was noted by all three. This category was explained in section 6.1.1 as an aim to apply learning in the workplace for the benefit of others, rather than for personal advantage. A general aim of updating knowledge, skills or qualifications featured for Beth and Chris, whereas acquiring specific, specialist knowledge and skills, for a new job or promoted post,

was reported by Anna and Chris. As outcomes, building professional capacity through updating knowledge or qualifications, specialist learning or career progression, was common to all respondents. Although only Beth had indicated career progression as a key motivation, it was interesting to note this as an outcome for all three. Enhancing personal capabilities, not noted as a motivation in the community education group, was common to all as an outcome. Putting learning to work, although an aim for learning across respondents, was reported as an outcome only by Chris, in relation to action research.

Characteristics of critical reflection, work-related and independent home-based study, were common across all respondents. Work-related study indicated links between the content of study and the participant's workplace responsibilities, which might contribute to an applied learning approach. Independent study meant individual responsibility for learning, rather than, for example, attending classes or learning with a peer group. As this form of study was described by all respondents as taking place at home, the category was coded as 'independent home-based study'. Informal sharing of learning was reported by Anna, and collaborative learning formed a key part of Chris's action research project. However, interpersonal communication in the workplace or academy were limited in this group. Chris reported the introduction of a professional learning portal, indicating the challenges and potential of this as a shared learning characteristic across the profession, rather than in monitoring and recording professional CPD for registered members.

Boundaries between work and study noted in the community education group as work-related study that impacted on family life, described as 'work/study/life imbalance'. Tensions between professional accountability and altruistic principles of work were reported in two accounts, in relation to a CPD and registration framework, accepting that this was still in development. Disconnection between work and study, as non-transferable specialist knowledge, was reported by Anna. Synergies in this group included Beth's example of 'working across contexts', as concurrent part-time employment in workplace and university settings, and 'putting learning to work', reported by all three were recognised as a means of crossing boundaries between work and study, particularly in Chris's account of leading participative action research. As aspirational synergies, in Chris's account, categories of 'leadership for learning' and 'pathways into education' referred to proposals that the



outcomes of learning could be determined by forward planning and facilitated by leadership, and synergies between workplace and academy extended through links between professional CPD and recognition of prior learning (RPL).

In summary, motivation of ensuring quality was not apparent, possibly explained by non-requirement of professional CPD for registration. Across the categories, there were indications of individual and shared learning factors, although as a general observation, continuing learning in this profession seemed individualised, despite aspirations of putting learning to work. Despite some reference to informal sharing and to Chris's learning organisation, significant exclusions in this data included lack of reference to role models, teaching others, or to interpersonal support as a characteristic or synergy in learning, noted in the other professions. In a profession concerned with communicative and participative learning, this was surprising, indicating a trend, particularly in relation to academic study, towards individualised continuing learning.

Next, continuing learning categories identified by education practitioners are presented.

## 7.2 Education

In the field of education, all three respondents had completed workplace-based Master's study, and had teaching experience of ten years or more, representing a range of education contexts. In this group, two had completed the Chartered Teacher award scheme. Although this route was subsequently withdrawn, the approach was included as a significant profession-work-academy initiative in continuing professional learning for Scottish teachers. In this group, all respondents were female, aged between 40 and 50. Initial indicators were D, E and F, with assumed names allocated as Donna, Emma and Flora.

### 7.2.1 Donna

Donna had become a lecturer in higher education, having worked her way through stages of teaching in nursery, primary, secondary and further education. She explained that she had gained a series of qualifications as an adult learner, taking advantage of wider access arrangements. As she gained more qualifications, her career progressed, although this had not been a primary motive for learning. As an FE lecturer, Donna studied for an education

Master's in leadership and management and as an HE lecturer, she aimed to study for a doctorate. Donna stressed that her learning was not extrinsically driven, nor had she felt a need for an additional qualification, although she recognised the importance of extending both her knowledge and career. She expressed motivation for study as self-fulfilment and enjoyment of the challenge in continuing her learning journey.

I really enjoy learning. Whilst I can look at developing my in-depth knowledge, career progression, I think a lot of it comes down to self-fulfilment, and just wanting to continue. Nobody was there saying "this is what you need to get to the next step", because I could have gone into leadership or management without having a Master's degree, so really it was something for me, to keep me learning, to keep a hand in. (D/19)

Donna's commitment to learning 'for the sake of learning' suggested Maslow's (1943) idea of self-actualisation. She also described this as self-motivation, and indicated a goal of putting learning to work in supporting others.

I think that's just having self-motivation, I want to give those I work with, whether that's the students, the team I'm working with, or external colleagues. I just want to be the best that I can be for them, so that I'm not letting them down, and I'm not letting myself down. (D, 127)

Donna accepted that a further motivation had been to ensure that her career would enable her to support her family, and their education:

What's motivated me too, within that career progression, was really to be able to finance my children ... that was always at the back of my mind, I wanted them to have the education that I didn't take up, if they chose to have it. (D/135)

She also felt that education practitioners had an inbuilt desire to keep learning, as part of a workplace culture for continuing learning: 'people in education naturally want to develop and keep learning, it's intrinsic'. (D/57)

In tandem with an intrinsic motivation for learning, Donna had embarked on a journey of expanding her professional capacity. Donna was able to take advantage of UK wider access

to education initiatives such as the Open University, and a scheme for encouraging more women into science teaching. When employer funding for further learning was not available, she chose to fund her own continued studies at Master's level. The outcomes of her learning meant career progression through various levels of teaching from classroom assistant to higher education lecturer.

Asked about characteristics of how she learned in work, Donna explained that learning from others had been important.

Seeing those people who I value as role models; they've made such a big impact on me, there's people I kind of think, that's the way I'd like to be ... to take some of those elements and try to build them up in myself. (D/125)

Professional membership had presented a geographical boundary between contexts of profession and work for Donna, in that her qualifications and experience gained in England meant that she was not eligible to join the Scottish GTCS. As Donna was therefore not required to complete CPD for continued registration, this gave her an alternative viewpoint about 'being professional'.

For me to be professional...I don't need to have a set of standards and tick them off, and say I've achieved that and that. To me, being professional is being a good member of your team, and making sure that you are continually developing. I think you take responsibility for that yourself, rather than having it placed upon you.

Perhaps we do need some guidance from the establishment of what the culture is and falling in line with that, but as a professional, I've got a good understanding of that, from the different experiences I've had. (D/123)

In Donna's account, she expressed intrinsic and altruistic motivation for learning, where outcomes were of benefit to others. What seemed different in her experience was self-motivation, and a limitation of extrinsic motivation from employers, or of requirements of a professional agency to meet specific standards. As an overall synergy between contexts and purposes, processes and parameters of ongoing learning seemed to be more closely related in Donna's situation. Becoming professional for Donna had involved experiential characteristics of working in different settings, undertaking theoretical study, training,

observation and modelling, and applying her learning in relation to people she was working with. As lifelong learner, her intrinsic motivation had been more towards learning as self-actualisation than as a means of gaining qualifications for salary or status, accepting that a primary outcome had been career progression. Boundaries were limited in Donna's account, other than a division between profession and study, in that her qualifications were not transferable to GTCS membership. As synergies, she described arrangements for study-home compatibility, studying with and acting as a role model for her children, and ensuring that her choices of ongoing learning for and within work-study contexts were both challenging and enjoyable.

In comparison, the Chartered Teacher scheme discussed by the next two respondents had a more extrinsic motivational drive.

### 7.2.2 Emma

Emma made a choice to take the Chartered Teacher (CT) route to a MEd, when the scheme was introduced. The scheme was self-funded, but with salary incentives on completion. Her initial motivation for study was to enhance her salary as primary wage-earner, and later became an aim of personal achievement.

I needed to be able to support my (family). I didn't want to go into school management, and this was another route to a higher salary. So I started the CT; you had to pay for the modules yourself, but after each module you got a salary increment. (E/154)

Later, study became more of a personal aspiration: 'I thought it would be quite nice to have a Master's degree; it was more of a personal goal towards the end' (E/155).

As an outcome of study, Emma felt that her work had been affected during the six-year period when she was working on the MEd as well as working full-time. Where previously, some school work had been carried out during evenings or weekends, this time was used for study.

It was all in my own time, for six years. And to be honest, I would say that the teaching side of things did suffer a little - well, something had to give. (E/169)

Further outcomes of study were 'putting learning to work', where Emma was able to apply action research skills with her class, and continued to update her knowledge.

There were things that I read (which) did affect what I was doing in the class. It made me more open to research, keeping more up-to-date with things. A lot of it was linked to school; there were things you could do, small action research things in the classroom, then reflect on and write about, so that was very useful. (E, 221; 157)

As characteristics of learning in work, Emma explained that modelling, coaching, trial and error, dialogue, sharing new initiatives and building up classroom experience had been important to her professional learning. Informal discussion in the staffroom focused on problem-solving; new initiatives of teaching and learning communities were more structured and informative.

I think a lot of what you learn as a teacher is learned when you go into class. It's good to watch other teachers; probably the first few years of teaching is when I learned most. A lot of it was just talking to other experienced teachers and getting their advice, things they tried and things that worked for them, but you have to do things yourself and try things and figure out what works for you. The staff room was a good place, often you find that things you're having difficulty with, other people are as well. People would talk about things they were trying; about solving problems; we would talk about that a lot, and it was very informal. I know as the years went on, it became a bit more organised. A lot of schools now have teaching and learning communities (TLCs), you would meet once a month and you would talk about (a topic), what you're doing in that area, and share good practice. (E/171-175)

As boundaries between work and professional CPD, Emma explained that budget restraints meant there were less opportunities for face-to-face courses, and that increasing pressures of work were prioritised over learning opportunities. She expressed a view that there was a need for teachers to meet to talk, to reflect and share practice.

Teaching is such a busy job, I think a lot of the CPD falls to the wayside while you just deal with the practicalities...there's no money now for structured courses, (which are) getting pushed out more and more and I think that's a big mistake. Teachers need that, even to go for a day and meet other teachers, and talk about the difficulties that you're having, and have time to reflect, that's what it's all about really, isn't it take a step back and think, "I'm doing this and it's ok, but it could be better".  
(E/242)

Accepting that need for dialogue, Emma felt that there had been a tension surrounding the value of some CPD inputs and demands of work, expressing a view that in-school CPD inputs were not as useful as the external courses.

The CPD we were getting in school in the last 2-3 years was kind of school-based inputs and a lot of it was a waste of time. Of course, that just gets teachers' backs up, you know, "this CPD is a total waste of time, I would be better off doing things in the classroom". I think teachers now are getting a more and more negative view of CPD. (E/244)

In Emma's experience, although the CT scheme had been professional initiative, boundaries had existed between her academic study and work in school. Emma felt this was due to lack of manager interest in her studies.

I suppose the main thing for me was the management team in the school really had no interest at all. Maybe if they'd said, "right, so what are you up to" (or) "why don't you report back to the staff on that?" I might have taken that step. (E/241)

She gave two examples where managers had reinforced a disconnection between study and work, first, in a lack of feedback when Emma gave her dissertation to school management, and second in seeming disinterest in her achievement in gaining a Master's degree:

I gave my study to (senior manager), and that was the last I heard of it. I didn't get any feedback, I don't even know if he read it (laughs). I asked for a day off to go to my graduation, and I didn't even get "oh, that's great, congratulations". In my school,

certainly, they didn't see it as impacting on school at all. They just thought that's a personal thing, "off you go and do it". (E/226-227)

To address this disconnection, Emma thought that a peer group of colleagues studying together might have improved work-study synergy: 'it might have made a big difference to me if someone else had been even doing it at the same time as me' (E/229).

In a response to question about professional CPD requirements, Emma explained that her annual appraisal drew from an evidence-based CPD portfolio.

We had a requirement of so many hours per year, and we were supposed to keep a portfolio of things we had done and how that affected our teaching - but I never did! Nobody ever asked me for it. We had a yearly CPD meeting with the head teacher, and you filled in a form during the year and he had a copy of that. But really it was just a list of courses we went on. (E/159)

When less courses were provided, the responsibility passed to individuals to structure their own learning, and hours provided for CPD were used to meet the demands of work.

I know they say there's so many hours built in; the non-class contact time that was introduced in the McCrone report was supposed to be CPD time, but I would spend it sorting out homework, or organising reading books, just doing the practical things that are really time consuming'. (E/244)

Although evidencing GTCS standards had been incorporated into assessment in the Chartered Teacher scheme as an example of synergy between academy and profession, Emma felt that these seemed 'tacked-on' rather than integral to her learning.

Sometimes I think the professional expectations of the GTC are very much a paper exercise. In the (Chartered Teacher) assignments, we had to mention how we were meeting the standards, and at that point, that was at the bottom of my list of priorities. I always felt that was just a paper exercise I had to stick in to my essay. (E/221)

A contradiction in Emma's experience was that the MEd route to Chartered Teacher status was seemingly not included within the required 35 hours per year of professional CPD. Explaining that she 'had got away with it' presented a division between work and study.

Strangely enough, Chartered Teacher work wasn't supposed to count towards CPD. It's probably the most intense CPD I've ever done, but it wasn't counted towards it. But obviously, I was doing a lot of reading, I was implementing new things in the class, so my head teacher was quite happy to count it as my CPD, so that's possibly why I got away with it. (E/159-163)

In Emma's experience, her motivation for ongoing learning had been driven by principles of the CT scheme, and its financial incentive. She explained that a salary increase was significant for her family income, and that limited promotion prospects in schools meant that this was an opportunity not to be missed. Outcomes were that study had made a positive contribution to Emma's learning and work, although this was reported as detached from professional accountability. A key, albeit unanticipated, outcome of study for Emma was career progression, where shortly after completing her MEd studies, she became a lecturer in higher education. As characteristics of her learning, where provision of external courses had provided opportunities for dialogue with other teachers, these had been withdrawn in favour of independent learning. In boundary factors, Emma explained that a division between her study and work had been exacerbated by the seeming disinterest of her managers. Similarly, divisions between professional and academic learning outcomes were described, where study was not applicable as professional CPD. Synergies for learning were proposed as opportunities for dialogue, both informal and formal, with local study groups or school cohorts for academic learning as a key idea, to enable both shared and distributed learning in schools.

### 7.2.3 Flora

Flora had worked with a local authority as a teacher and later moved to work in higher education after engaging with the Chartered Teacher (CT) scheme through an experiential route. As a lecturer, she then completed an MEd degree, and began studying for a doctorate. Like Emma, Flora explained her motivation for engagement with the CT scheme



as mainly financial: 'a lot of teachers did it for the money, admittedly - as did I - because you don't get a pay rise otherwise' (F/330). As an outcome of learning for teachers, Flora explained that on completion of the award by either route, there had been no arrangements to accommodate a change in role which corresponded with the learner's newly acquired knowledge and capabilities, not to mention increased salary. From its introduction in 2001, the scheme ran for eleven years and was discontinued in 2012. In this study, the initiative presented an example of continuing learning which crossed boundaries between profession, work, and academy.

As characteristics of learning, Flora explained the routes into the Chartered Teacher scheme as academic or experiential. The latter route recognised experienced expertise in teaching. In the former, linking a commitment to learning with an academic qualification would increase the numbers of Master's level teachers in the profession, and in so doing, enhance the workforce capacity in terms of knowledge and expertise. The method of encouraging teachers to pursue (and pay for) accredited learning was a 'stick and carrot' incentive of increased salary on completion of the award.

I mean it made sense because what it did was recognised extra commitment and expertise in education, and it was rewarded with money. What happened was a lot of teachers did it, but it didn't really work because most people did it for the money and there was no associated task with it in the school. (F/325)

Flora explained that a recommendation of the 2010 Donaldson report was for teaching become a Master's level profession. Although that goal was not unanimously endorsed, the CT scheme was a way to encourage more teachers to engage in Master's level learning. When the scheme was discontinued, motivation for Master's study learning was apparent in a marked drop in MEd applicants.

Basically, everybody embarking on the Master's was doing it for Chartered Teacher. The minute they found they weren't going to get their Chartered Teacher, there was no motivation to do a Master's. Why would you? If you weren't going to get extra money? (F/327)

As a boundary which emerged between the work and academy, Flora explained that in the workplace, an experiential route to the Chartered Teacher award was considered to be more valuable than a Master's degree.

I was discouraged as a teacher, from doing a Master's ... "do the Chartered Teacher, that's much better for you - a Master's isn't going to get you anything".  
(F/330)

From this advice, Emma embarked on the experiential route. However, to complete the Chartered Teacher award by either route, a first step was to take a Master's level module.

As an outcome of her study, Flora found that linking practice to theory was insightful; reading and reflection raised her awareness about effective ways of working.

For me the first Master's module was an absolute wake-up call in terms of my practice, based on the theory I was reading. It really made me stop and look at how I practiced. Theoretical perspectives that I'd read as an undergraduate student and kind of just let it wash over me, I reread as a practitioner and saw everything completely differently. I had an almost literal light bulb moment. (F/334)

Where theoretical ideas had not necessarily been relevant to Flora's practice experience as a student, Piaget's (1978) ideas of assimilated or accommodated learning had not necessarily taken place. As a work-based practitioner, theories that related to her work were meaningful and could be incorporated with her experience, representing Piaget's stage of equilibrium. Stemming from her positive experience of academic study, Flora moved to work in higher education. Rather than completing the Chartered Teacher award by the experiential route, she completed the award as an MEd, which was seen as more transferable across contexts.

I changed job and came to the university, and Chartered Teacher had no currency here. So, I'd done most of the work towards it, but instead of doing the final hurdle, I did a teaching certificate in higher education, which was relevant professional development for the context I was in, and then I finished my Master's. (F/346)

Flora explained a boundary between academic study and experiential practice, which she termed a 'brick wall', as a seeming 'anti-academic' division between practical skills and theoretical knowledge. Flora considered that there was a focus in school on learning the skills knowing 'how to' as opposed to theories of 'knowing why'.

There's still very much a kind of anti-academic thing in teaching. People start to build that brick wall when they finish university, they think they've shut the door on that.

The culture in a lot of schools is quite negative towards studying; teachers say, 'look, you learn everything you need to know in the classroom, don't you worry about all that stuff they tell you at the university'. They want this kind of 'top tips for teachers'; if you go into class tomorrow, you do x, y and z then everything will be great, without really understanding why. (F/331-337)

In this comment, Flora indicated a boundary between academy and work. Having completed the academic qualification, teachers then needed to learn the craft of teaching, through progression of technical guidance as 'top tips', in the development of experiential learning as 'learning everything you need to know in the classroom'. A boundary between work and study in Flora's view, was enhanced in a workplace culture that rejected study.

I think that's a kind of growing culture that needs to be broken down. And I think there's this kind of inverted snobbery about studying and higher education, "oh look at you doing your Master's, oh, you think you're so great!" (F/339)

In Flora's view, ongoing study contributed to a separation between colleagues who previously held the same levels of qualification and of responsibility. This gave an example of credentialist arguments of Brown et al. (1997) and Collins (1994), who suggested that credentialism could contribute to a fragmentation of a professional construct of collegiality in teaching. Flora's observation also referenced an implied division in status (Flora used the term 'snobbery'), representative of Bourdieu's (1979) societal divisions in social, cultural and economic capitals, symbolised by the credential as certificate of passage to higher social status.

As a lecturer, Flora began doctoral study. Explaining her motivation for this, she used the term 'expectations' to describe changing requirements in universities to employ staff with doctoral level qualifications, and for staff to undertake and publish research.

I finished my Master's and then went on to do a PhD. Why? Expectations, and I wanted it for me. It felt right. If you'd asked me the year before, or even two years before, I would have laughed, because I'm not a traditionally academic person, I mean why would I have a PhD? That's for people that aren't like me. But then that changed and I thought no, I can do this and I will do this because this is something I want to do. (F/381)

In this account, Flora explained intrinsic motivation for study which built on the successful achievement of her Master's degree, and extrinsic employer requirements. Using the term 'expectations' meant not only a positive idea of workplace culture for learning, but also two extrinsic factors of motivation, implied but not verbalised by Flora. One was that the workplace funded her doctoral study, and second, the workplace as a university had a vested interest in research outputs which would contribute to institutional impact factors determined by the Research Excellence Framework. Flora's personal account of her feelings about 'a traditionally academic person' indicated a third unspoken concern about continuing learning in higher education, where university lecturers are often required to demonstrate expertise in two roles, as teachers and as researchers.

Flora gave an account of balancing the challenges of a promoted post with her doctoral study, where motivation and time for study 'dropped significantly', and she stepped back from study for a year.

I took a temporary withdrawal for a year, and decided I would use that year to catch up and get lots of work done - which I didn't do. My motivation had waned, the time to do it had evaporated, and it just became negative. Even the time that I found was short, and irregular; I would spend so much time catching up to where I'd been before, that I didn't make progress, and then it just became impossible. Even if I had a weekend and I would think "right, I'm going to study all weekend", I would be cleaning out the bottom of the sink with a toothbrush. I was procrastinating, it had so

many negative connotations, I couldn't do it. So I stopped. I decided not to do it.

(F/382)

In this description, the priorities of a new post had demanded her full attention, and study became neither important nor enjoyable. Again, an unspoken concern for Flora was that she did not mention any support structures in her account, from supervisors, work colleagues or other students. This did not mean that support was not available, rather that it was not described as a central feature of her feelings and decisions about study. She stressed a continuing commitment to learning: '(it) did not mean stopping professional development, or looking into things I'm still interested in. But the PhD itself - my brain had decided how I was going to view it, and it was very hard to get out of that cycle' (F/383). I asked if she might return to it later, and Flora agreed 'I will do it, just not in this timeframe'. (F/384)

Moving on to talk about her experience of the characteristics of professional CPD, Flora explained resistance to a perceived 'top-down' approach to continuing learning, in relation to CPD requirements of 35 hours of learning.

Alongside the kind of top-down, 'what you should be studying and how you should be studying it' ideas, CPD has this idea that you do it, and then it's a ticky-box sort of thing, 'I've done my CPD hours for this year and that's the end of it', so I think there's this kind of 'you do it and shove it out of the way', because it's time consuming and it's a waste of time. (F/371)

As synergies in continuing learning, Flora thought that greater links between universities and local authorities were needed to forge reciprocal exchange between learning contexts, promoting the benefits of applied research for enhanced practice. This approach, she felt, could help to topple the 'brick wall' between the academy and work, in disseminating valuable research and developing expertise.

In Flora's account, her primary motivation for ongoing learning was the appeal of an employer-led workforce development scheme offering increased salary. This reflected Beth's idea of 'pragmatic' motivation: 'if the opportunity is there, why not take it?' In later motivation

for doctoral study, expectations of employers, employer funding, and a culture for learning encouraged Flora considered ongoing learning as a process of self-actualisation.

As a key learning characteristic, Flora explained independent home-based study as the main feature of her doctoral study. There seemed to be limited opportunity for collaboration in learning, either face-to-face or online, and a category of 'interpersonal support', as a characteristic, also indicated as a key synergy between contexts in the documentary analysis, was not apparent in Flora's account. Two forms of boundaries featured in Flora's account, where she described a culture in schools of division between study and work, described as a 'brick wall' and between professional CPD and work, which some teachers saw as a 'tick-box' exercise. To address the former, Flora suggested greater synergy between the profession and academy in recognising and disseminating the benefits of research in education. Recognising the role of study in enhancing practice would in Flora's view, cross boundaries between academic learning and professional CPD.

Next, key categories for this professional group are summarised and compared in Table 20.

#### 7.2.4 Education: comparison of themes

Motivation	Donna	Emma	Flora
Specialist knowledge and skills	•		
Employer-funded		•	•
Intrinsic desire for learning	•		
Putting learning to work	•	•	
Knowledge/qualification update		•	
Career progression	•		
Learning for change	•		
Outcomes			
Extending personal capabilities	•	•	•
Package of qualifications	•	•	•
Building professional capacity	•	•	•
Putting learning to work	•	•	
Characteristics			
Work-related study	•	•	•
Critical reflection	•	•	
Independent home-based study	•	•	•
Informal sharing	•	•	
Role models	•		
Learning for change	•		
Learning communities		•	

Teaching others		•	
Professional competency framework		•	
Boundaries			
Work-study disconnection		•	
Academy-profession division			•
Work-profession dissociation	•	•	•
Work-home-study imbalance			•
Synergies			
Putting learning to work	•		•
Profession-work CPD		•	•
Leadership for learning			
Learning communities/networks		•	•

Table 20 Education categories

In this group, a distinctive feature of continuing learning in education was the innovative CT scheme, which provided motivation for two respondents as financial reward, described as 'employer-funded', as although practitioners had to pay for learning upfront, completion of the award led to a salary increase. Other motivations were noted as updating knowledge, putting learning to work and an individual intrinsic desire for learning, which was also described as integral to the teaching profession. In one case, after reflection, career progression was identified as a motivating factor. As characteristics of learning, the experiential accreditation of evidence-based practice and academic study featured for two respondents who had followed the CT scheme. For the third, academic study had been progressive over a number of years, indicating that successfully achievement of an award or qualification might lead to further study. In this respect, Donna indicated an enjoyment of study, which contributed to her continued study as a lifelong learner. As outcomes, personal capabilities, additional qualifications and career progression study featured for all three respondents.

Characteristics of work-related study applied in all cases, while putting learning to work as applied learning was described by two respondents. Reflection, role modelling and informal sharing featured as characteristics for teachers, where observing and emulating good practice, and informal, collegiate, problem-sharing dialogue were indicated as core learning approaches.

As boundaries, disconnection between work and study seemed apparent in Emma's concerns about managerial disinterest in her studies, and in Flora's 'brick wall' analogy for a culture of academic disengagement in teaching. A profession-work boundary was implied in the 'tick-box' description of competency frameworks used to record evaluative professional CPD. An institutional boundary of eligibility for professional membership had been experienced by Donna, however this had enabled her to rationalise 'being professional' as socially constructed and relational. Synergies were proposed as learning communities, profession-academy collaboration in promoting the benefits of applied research, and forging closer links between work, academy and profession in learning which could meet both sets of academic and professional standards.

In this data, as in the previous group, ensuring quality was not identified as a motivating factor for learning, suggesting a disassociation between learning, professional principles and procedural CPD. In the education group, there seemed to be an indication of less potential for synergies across learning contexts. Working across different learning contexts, for example through part-time secondment in university and school, was not mentioned, nor were RPL, or pathways to education, or learning for change. In the education group, interpersonal support was also a significant omission as a characteristic in learning, or factor of boundary crossing. This does not mean that dialogue with and support from tutors, peers, colleagues or family did not happen, merely that it was not mentioned as a significant factor of learning in this data.

Next, key categories of professional learning in nursing are presented.

### 7.3 Nursing

In this group, all three practitioners trained first in general nursing and subsequently moved to different specialisms. One was a charge nurse; a second, a manager, and the third, having worked as a nurse manager, was a lecturer in nursing at a Scottish university. All three worked in specialist fields of nursing, and all were registered members of the Nursing and Midwifery Council. Two had completed Master's degrees in the workplace; a third was in the process of completing a Master's, and one was studying for a doctorate. In this group,



two respondents were female and one male, aged 45-55. Indicators for this group were G, H and J, with allocated names of Gerda, Helen and Jim.

### 7.3.1 Gerda

Gerda, a charge nurse in a specialist area of nursing, explained her progress in academic study. Starting with a Higher National Diploma (HND) in the mid-1990s, Gerda upgraded her diploma to a BA in Nursing and continued her academic learning with a work-based professional development degree. She then continued to a work-based Master's degree at the same university. Gerda explained that her motivation for study was initially to upgrade academic qualifications, during a period of transition from diploma to degree.

It was the very first year of Project 2000, the guinea pig year...at that time it was a HND. Professionally, at that time, the call wasn't particularly that nursing staff should have degrees. Later on, after about 2-3 years, I did a nursing degree to top up what I already had. Then I took a professional development degree, and came back to do my Master's. (G/63)

Asked about why she had continued with academic study, Gerda explained an intrinsic motivation, based on inquiry and application of knowledge, which she considered to be integral to the professional nursing role.

I enjoy it, that's the bottom line. I like learning, despite the fact that it can be hard work and a challenge. I like knowing things, and I find it all very exciting. And then I like applying knowledge to make things better and different or improved, and I think that's the mark of nursing ... they encourage people to be like that, but I think I would be like that regardless of what job I was in. (G/71)

Gerda was of the view that self-motivation, critical thinking and emotional intelligence were necessary factors in ongoing learning in nursing, where keeping up-to-date was not so much about gaining academic qualifications, but about applying the skills of inquiry.

You really do have to have an inquiring mind to keep up-to-date; and to want to continue to know more. But you also need to be compassionate, and caring and all those other things as well, both things are important. You don't have to be for ever seeking more and

more academic qualifications, but you need to know what's going on, and you have to be prepared to go and find out. (G/110)

In addition, Gerda considered that keeping pace with technological innovation was a motivational factor as in Bauman's (2008: 92) caution of 'being thrown overboard by fast-accelerating technological progress'.

Because things move so fast - if you sit on your laurels for more than half an hour - something new comes along, there's innovation, there's new technology, there's all kinds of new areas of practice. (G/109)

As motivation for professional registration, Gerda recognised the importance of the professional agency in ensuring that ongoing learning met changing needs of safe and effective practice. 'Part of NMC's role is to ensure public safety', she explained, 'to make sure that the practitioners are as up-to-date in practice as they can be' (G/103). This motivation, although still concerned with update, in this case was led by a professional quality assurance requirement.

Asked about the characteristics of professional CPD, Gerda replied 'five days' - they expect that five days in every year that you have done something in updating practice learning and education' (G/86). She explained that every nurse was expected to keep a portfolio record of CPD, to be produced on request.

They don't ask to see them every year, they just ask you to tick a box to say that you've done it. Most people don't keep a portfolio, and you can show you've done five days just by attending mandatory training, because this training can be self-led and self-directed. (G/87)

The extent to which this process was sufficient in ensuring quality of learning, or in advancing competence, was questioned in Gerda's comment that 'five days is hardly challenging' (G/87). Gerda thought that meeting Post-registration Education and Practice (PREP) standards for the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) felt like a 'tick-box' exercise.

The KSF is the mandatory supervision tool, which records people's knowledge and skills. When they brought in the new grading systems, each grade has a gateway... and you can't cross over a particular gateway unless you have competences at a certain level. That's the way it's supposed to work, but really, it's a bit of a tick-box exercise. We do have to register; we have to pay for that registration to be renewed every year. Individually, every last one of us, and you don't go to work without it as a nurse. (G/89)

Asked about other characteristics her professional learning, Gerda explained that her experience had been one of role modelling, and recognising negative traits or cultures could also be important. 'Toeing the line' as compliance learning was mentioned briefly, with a view that this did not create a good culture for learning.

I remember when I started nursing, looking at two or three individuals and thinking "you're really good, I like the way you do that, I'd like to know how you do that and be able to do it like you". Just as easily, you find folk that you think, "I hope I'm never going to be like that". So, I think people do kind of home in on good practice. I know that there are areas where the culture's not great, and it's just people toeing the line, instead of... (*sentence tailed off*). But I do think that people emulate good practice. (G/94)

Explaining the importance of teaching others as a characteristic of nurse learning, Gerda had instigated 'peer group supervision' as a community for practice learning.

Supervision is incredibly important ... we do peer group supervision at work ... it takes different form once a fortnight, we can have either a clinical problem, a particular symptom, diagnosis or medication, or patient care. We could have a journal article, or a guest speaker, somebody from pharmacy or from a speciality area if there's something that we want to know. I was trying it on a PDSA - plan, do, study, act – cycle. We're doing it for an hour once a fortnight. (G/63)

The PDSA cycle (Taylor et al., 2014) which Gerda described was a quality improvement process, based on a Nursing Process model introduced in the 1970s of 'assessment,

planning, implementation, evaluation' (Pearson et al., 1996), which underpinned nurse training. In Gerda's example of the cycle, her professional learning involved both propositional and socially constructed knowledge which informed more insightful planning, application and evaluation.

As outcomes, Gerda described a process of leading a workplace change initiative, stemming from her action research project which had led her to critically examine and address changes in workplace processes. Gerda gave an example of implementing a new policy across her workplace and beyond, using the knowledge, skills and confidence she had achieved through academic study.

The benefit of the education and knowledge that I had gained on the degree, and the confidence that went with that, really allowed me to plug away at that, fight the fight, design, implement and deliver that whole programme of care to the staff. It started off just in the hospital and then rolled out right across the (region); then I did more with NHS Education for Scotland (NES), in taking that forward a bit further. It wasn't easy (but) the feedback from the staff was great, it was about getting them to reflect on their practice and think about how they could do things differently. (G/78)

From this experience, Gerda argued that acquiring knowledge in itself was not enough, and that criticality and application were essential components of effective learning.

A boundary issue in nursing was between work and the academy, where the profession had moved to degree-only entry from 2013. Whereas the key debate about whether or not academic study would improve the quality of 'good nursing' applied mainly to qualifying degrees, arguments extended to academic study as ongoing professional learning. Gerda explained three general arguments: first, that in nursing, in addition to propositional knowledge, experiential skills were necessary, as was emotional intelligence, exercised as for example, care and compassion (Goleman, 1995). Second, there was a suggestion that nursing had merely followed other professions in adopting degree-entry. This argument linked to a third argument of whether or not nursing was a valid profession.

There was a lot of debate, because people said no, nurses shouldn't be primarily academic, that's not what makes a good nurse; what makes a good nurse is the compassion; it's ok being able to learn new information - but there's so many more qualities we want to see in nurses. There was this drive that was trying to bring it in line with other professions, where a degree was the minimum for entry to that profession, like teaching, or law, or social work. Then some people still don't see nursing as an actual profession, it's one that fights for the right to call itself a profession. (G/105)

The argument against academic accreditation was that nursing has particular specialist skills that are ethical, attitudinal and behavioural, explained later in Jim's narrative as diligence, compassion, relational and communication skills. This reflected Goleman's (1995) idea of emotional intelligence, which suggested abilities beyond cognitive intelligence, in self-management, communication skills and empathy in relating to others. Gerda considered that a degree encouraged nurses to have 'an inquiring mind', but recognised that an academic qualification was not sufficient in itself for effective nursing.

As long as that's not seen as the only thing you need to be a nurse is a degree, because that's simply not true; you do need to have other abilities. It's not the be all and end all. (G/107)

In her responses, Gerda's motivations for learning were based on an intrinsic enjoyment of learning. Extrinsic motivation was influenced by employer funding, and in response to professional upgrading of entry qualifications, towards updating her qualifications. Professional registration requirements influenced learning as quality assurance of safe and effective practice, although this seemed more of an administrative than learning process. Gerda noted keeping up with technological innovations, and keeping pace with developments in specialist knowledge and skills as important motivational factors for learning in nursing. As outcomes, Gerda did not move to a new job after her second degree, but stayed in post, and was able to make changes in practice at workplace and regional levels. In addition to qualifications, knowledge and skills, professional capacity and personal capabilities, outcomes of her action research approach were the implementation of a change

process, dissemination of her investigation within the wider organisation, cascade training and building a supervisory learning community. Boundaries in Gerda's example focused around contemporary academy-workplace debates about 'knowing that', 'knowing how', and being a compassionate professional, in response to gaining academic credentials vis-à-vis experiential learning in a structured community of practice. As synergies, Gerda's experience of leading an action research project crossed boundaries between academic study and her workplace responsibilities.

### 7.3.2 Helen

Helen explained that her main motivation for study as continuing learning was knowledge and skills update.

One reason I wanted to do it and it's the same with one of my colleagues, we've been qualified for so long and we were getting students coming out to us who've got a completely different way of thinking, we don't know where they're coming from, so we had to go back to university to find out what the current thinking is, really. It's keeping up with the times, isn't it? (H/120)

A second motivation for Helen was having moved to a management role and employer funding for a cohort of staff to study an organisational management Master's degree.

I did the degree, because I had gone from a clinical background into management and it was easier for the NHS to put me somewhere to learn officially, rather for them to take the time out to teach me. It's a win-win situation, for me it was bonus, I learn about that and I get a degree out of it as well. (H/126)

Helen's comment of 'being put somewhere' reflected both a change in learning style from the traditional collective in-house training to academic study, as a separation between the workplace and university. For other colleagues, although not herself, Helen noted motivation for study as career progression:

There's people who would know there's a job coming up and they want or need a degree. That's one of the reasons people do it, they perceive it as opening doors to opportunities. (H/138)

In Helen's situation, managers had explained that employer support for Master's study was about learning for work, rather than about career progression.

They said "you're all doing this degree to improve your learning, you're not doing it to get a different job". So it depends on what people are doing it for. Are they doing it to consolidate what they're doing in their work, to get more qualifications, or just general interest, or are they doing it to get another job? I made an assumption that's it's for workforce development, but that's not necessarily the case. (H/138)

Outcomes of her study had been increased confidence, a feeling of enhanced credibility. Helen described the degree as 'a bit of paper' that symbolised an increase in her personal capabilities and professional capacity.

I think that when you have a degree you've got that bit of paper to say you've attained this level of academic achievement and that alone gives you confidence. There are a lot of people who say that you might have 16 years' experience and know something back to front, but feel that without the bit of paper that people aren't really listening to you. (H/122)

A further outcome was her critical questioning of the influences, rationale or evidence in a given situation.

The biggest change that I found was I would ask "what is the background and what are the drivers? I'm constantly thinking that, and I would never have thought of that before. "What's your evidence for saying that? Why are you saying that?" (H/142)

As an important outcome, Helen felt that she had been able to contribute to advancing professional knowledge.

The research I did was about (health condition), and there was a story in the papers about a case. I was able to say I'd done research on it; I sent a copy of my results

(to a consultant) and she found that useful, so it's been used at a national level.

(H/98)

For Helen, a key characteristic of learning was support from the nursing profession, both financially and in terms of support from managers and colleagues. Helen described this as a benefit of working in a learning organisation (Senge, 1999), which encouraged practitioners to be generous with sharing knowledge and support.

I found everybody bent over backwards to help me. I was overwhelmed with how generous people were, even people at a very high level. I work in a learning organisation, so why wouldn't they, but they really were very good. It's also quite enjoyable trying to help people to get through what you have been through; I find that the more qualifications people have, the more generous they are with other people. Because I feel, "I've got this formal qualification, and why shouldn't I impart what I know?" It's all part of the learning process to be generous and sharing your knowledge with other people. (H/16)

A further characteristic of her experience had been learning with a group of colleagues, and this reflected in a preference for academic study involving face-to-face contact with others:

I preferred face-to-face contact (and) workshops, there was more peer support. I would pay more to have face-to-face contact rather than have it all on-line. (H/23)

A boundary issue indicated in this interview was the impact of study on family life, representing an imbalance between work, study and home life. Helen suggested that support was essential, and that study could have an adverse effect on family life.

There is an impact on the family as well - they have to support you and give you the time to do it. (I know of) a number of marriages that have split up as a result of doing a Master's. I remember asking a friend doing an MBA, 'are you still married?' and she said 'no, don't ask'. My marriage split up in the middle of it too. (H/135)

As a second boundary issue, although Helen felt that her study had been relevant to advancing personal and professional knowledge, she also expressed a feeling of frustration at not being able to continue to apply her research skills in the workplace. When Helen's



area of responsibility was the subject of strategic consultation, an external consultant had been recruited, although Helen felt she had the skills and abilities to conduct workplace research.

I was tempted to say “I’ve got an MSc in management, and you’re getting someone from the outside to come and do this, rather than looking at the talent you have within your organisation”. I think the problem is that people see you in a role, and how do people know that I’ve got this degree? I would say that can be a negative impact of study; that not enough people know I have these skills. Maybe it’s a slight on me that I don’t broadcast it; or maybe it’s to do with information being sent round saying “well done for doing it”. (H/129)

This comment was similar to Emma’s concern in teaching, where she had felt that managers had been disinterested in the application of her extended abilities in the workplace. Helen suggested there was a need for more challenges and opportunities for career progression following employer-supported academic learning.

A negative impact of further study is that people have done all this work and then they feel in their job because they’re stymied, they’ve done all these qualifications and then they think – “well what now? Is there a career path within in my organisation that I can follow as a result of my degree, or is that just it?” (H/126)

In Helen’s account, the synergies of a cohort studying together in face-to-face peer contact at study workshops had enabled boundary crossing between work and study. The support of a learning organisation had enriched her experience of study, although there seemed to a need for further bridging of a transition back into the workplace, in order to maximise the learning outcomes. Helen explained her motivation as employer-funded, to update her knowledge and skills, and develop specialist knowledge in relation to her managerial role. The pragmatic opportunity of a ‘win-win situation’ between workforce development for her employer and Helen’s acquisition of a degree revisited the dilemma presented by Beth of employer-funded study as both workforce upskilling and a personal credential. Outcomes of her learning included personal capabilities, critical thinking and inquiry skills, and a sense of professional achievement and credibility. Like Gerda, Helen stayed in her workplace role,

and experienced a boundary between work and study more during a re-engagement with her workplace responsibilities. Although Helen had talked favourably about general support from managers, her theoretical academic knowledge and research skills were seemingly not transferable to her managerial role. As in the metaphor of Alleyne's (2015) 'hero's journey', return to the original starting point after overcoming challenge in a different setting was problematic for Helen, and indicated a need for boundary crossing as planned and organised processes of study-workplace learning integration on completion of workplace-based academic qualifications.

Next, Jim described his experiences of nurse training in the workplace.

### 7.3.3 Jim

Jim had completed general nurse training, then worked in a specialist area before becoming a manager. After studying for a Master's degree, he had moved into higher education as a nurse lecturer. Jim explained that he had undergone training in a College of Nursing rather than studying for a university degree, following the merger of professional training colleges with universities, described by Eraut (1994). Jim explained that nurses had historical traditions of registration, where becoming professional involved training and socialisation to specific standards and principles.

How did I learn to become professional? Well what I did was old fashioned, we used to call it training; in the job, you were professionally socialised from an early stage; you were required, even in college, to wear uniform, and they called you 'nurse (surname)'. We had lectures on how to conduct yourself, even away from work, to uphold the good name of the profession. So, there was an element of taught aspects of professionalism, and of (complying with) the Nursing and Midwifery's Code of Conduct. It was a registered profession from the time I started, so there was a strong sense of adhering to professional principles from day one. (J/17-20)

As characteristics of learning, where nurse training had involved situated peer learning and assessment in clinical skills, Jim indicated that evidence was required not only of clinical skills but of interpersonal attitudes and approaches, such as diligence and integrity - he used the term 'professional conduct' here. He explained that assessment now included 'softer

skills' of communication, interpretation, presentation, which contributed to 'transferable skills of graduateness', an idea which resonated with the concept of graduate attributes (Bowden et al., 2000).

Jim explained that complex technical skills required in nursing were learned through demonstration; supervision, teamwork and integrated assessment and as dialogical, interpersonal exchange in a situated context.

It was usually 'show one, share one, do one'... you'd be shown something, the next time you would do it with someone, and they would talk you through it, then you would do it with somebody watching you: "you can put a catheter in, you can do that dressing, take out those sutures". (J/24)

An important aspect of assessment had been to explain verbally to a supervisor the procedures being carried out: 'a clinical charge nurse would ask you to give voice to what you were doing, and would correct any short cuts'. (J/29)

Collaboration was noted: 'you were observed as to how well you fitted in with the team' (J/24). Jim described his experience of learning through role modelling, in relation to professionalism, clinical abilities and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995)

Role models were everything...I guess being professional and clinically competent were the things we looked for, but also being approachable and compassionate. (J/31-32)

In these examples, the significance of practice skills in nursing were that theoretical knowledge alone was insufficient, and responsibilities for public safety and wellbeing relied on practical competence and efficiency.

As a boundary factor between work and academy, Jim explained that as nursing moved towards a degree qualification, this reduced the amount of practical training.

As nursing became a higher education qualification, there was less time to devote to ward-based learning after that. Where I spent about 75% of my time in clinical environments and 25% in theory; now its 50-50. (J/34)

Before degrees were a requirement, career progression involved a second registration as further qualifying training in a specialist area of work. For Jim, this requirement changed to having an academic qualification.

Before the end of my nurse general training, instead of a second registration, I was told “you might want to do a degree, because the way things are going, teachers are going to have to have degrees and nurses might have to have degrees” - this was 1987. From 1992, nurses had to have diplomas, and degrees from 2013. (J/38)

Jim stressed that teaching others was a requirement of nursing, rather than an optional extra. To achieve this, there was a particular focus on a learning characteristics as mentoring, coaching and supervision, within an experiential community of practice.

When you're a qualified nurse, education of other nurses is an element of the job description. It's a prerequisite, it's not an optional extra. To mentor students that were placed in your ward, you should create an educational environment. We all had to have mentor training – it was called preceptor training back in the day, and we were taught about negotiating, listening to students to find out what their learning needs were, told about being participants in creating an educationally suitable environment, and also about staging expectations of learning, to what theoretical development learners had before they came, so that we could understand what they should be capable of. (J/50)

The notion of the preceptor as a combination of tutor, guide, supervisor and mentor in the workplace learning context represents in the role of Vygotsky's (1978) 'more capable other', where learning needs were first determined, and interpersonal dialogue was a necessary precursor to intrapersonal, internalised learning. The staged development of learning also featured in Vygotsky's idea of the zone of proximal development, where learning challenges were pitched in relation to learner abilities and achievements.

In Jim's account, his motivation for learning was initially based on experiential socialisation as a member of regulated profession, then moved to academic accredited study as nursing moved to degree status, and employer funding was available to support the updating of qualifications. The outcomes of study for Jim were career progression, personal capabilities,

and the abilities to supervise, support and teach other nurses. In the workplace, the influence of preceptors as supervisors, tutors, mentors and role models, together with peer learning in a community of practice presented integrated interpersonal communication characteristics which illustrated the social construction of learning. Identification of learning needs and creation of a learning environment were indicative of the nursing role in teaching others, described by Jim as an important principle in this profession. Boundaries between contexts in Jim's account were apparent in changing culture of qualifying requirements in nursing, from mainly workplace-located training to an equal balance between academic study and practice experience. As synergies in nursing, Jim had indicated that ongoing learning in nursing was concerned with a situated and reciprocal checking, sharing and updating 'knowing how' as clinical skills, 'knowing why' as ethical awareness, in addition to propositional knowledge of 'knowing that'.

#### 7.3.4 Nursing: comparison of themes

Axial and selective categories coded in interviews with nursing practitioners are summarised in Table 21.

Motivation	Gerda	Helen	Jim
Specialist knowledge and skills		•	•
Employer-funded	•	•	•
Intrinsic desire for learning	•		•
Putting learning to work	•	•	•
Knowledge/qualification update	•	•	•
Ensuring quality	•		•
Learning for change	•		
Outcomes			
Extending personal capabilities	•	•	•
Package of qualifications	•	•	•
Building professional capacity	•	•	•
Putting learning to work	•	•	•
Characteristics			
Work-related study	•	•	•
Critical reflection	•	•	•
Independent home-based study		•	
Informal sharing	•	•	•
Role models	•	•	•
Learning for change	•		•
Interpersonal support	•	•	•
Teaching others	•	•	•

Learning communities	•	•	•
Professional competency framework	•		•
Boundaries			
Work-study disconnection		•	
Academy-profession division	•	•	•
Work-profession disassociation	•		
Work-home-study imbalance		•	
Synergies			
Putting learning to work	•		•
Profession-work CPD		•	
Leadership for learning			•
Pathways into education	•		
Learning communities/networks	•	•	•
Interpersonal support	•	•	•
Profession-academy RPL	•		
Learning for change	•	•	

Table 21 Nursing categories

Motivation for academic study in the nursing group was employer-funded, concerned with updating knowledge and qualifications and applying learning in the workplace. A move to degree-entry qualifications was a recent feature of professional learning in nursing, reflected in the reference to special funding to assist qualification updates. The supported, experiential, mentoring and reciprocal learning characteristics of situated nurse training contributed to learning motivations for all three respondents. As outcomes, two explained their study as applied action inquiry as leading change and making a difference in the workplace, and dissemination of their research findings at local and national levels. In this group, career progression was an outcome for one of the three respondents.

As characteristics, what seemed distinctive in nursing responses was an organisational culture for learning, exemplified by supportive managerial and collegiate staff, and shared learning responsibilities across the workforce. Continuing learning was located within a structured career framework (KSF) with financial, managerial, and collegial support. Learning was described as work-related, experiential and based on interpersonal communication and reciprocity, where teaching others was a significant factor of learning in all three nursing interviews.

Boundaries were indicated between the academy and workplace in relation to debates about the significance of degree-level credentials for the profession, as opposed to the importance of clinical skills and ethical practice. A work/study/life imbalance was noted in one situation where study had a detrimental effect on family relationships, although independent home study did not feature in other two responses. A boundary as disassociation between work and profession was only apparent in a one example of a low priority attached to procedural tick-box evidencing of learning requirements for registration.

As a synergy between work and profession, standards and registration for practice were respected as necessary requirements in nursing, and quality assurance recognised as essential for public safety. In terms of synergies between academy and work, for these participants, an organisational culture for ongoing learning had a positive effect on crossing boundaries between contexts, and between propositional, practical and ethical learning approaches.

Factors omitted in the nursing group were different from the previous two groups, in that motivation for learning did not include a goal of career progression, and working across contexts did not feature as an enacted or aspirational synergy. These two factors might represent sufficient different challenges within the profession, which together with a wider incidence of altruistic motivation and learning characteristics, foster an applied and supported culture for learning.

In the next section, interviews with three social work practitioners are reported.

## 7.4 Social Work

The three social work participants in the study included two former managers and a training specialist. Two participants had moved to higher education and a third had worked part-time with the university on secondment, before moving to a strategic policy role. Two had undertaken Master's study in the workplace, and one had gone on to complete a PhD while working in higher education. Another had completed a non-work related distance learning degree, and was considering doctoral study. All three social work participants were female,

aged 50-55, and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. Indicators for this group were K, L and M, and names were allocated as Kirsty, Lisa & Mary.

#### 7.4.1 Kirsty

As a former social work manager with a local authority, Kirsty talked about an MSc in management as the qualification most relevant to her work at that time. Her motivation for study was primarily financial support from the profession, through a workforce development initiative that aimed to increase the capacity of social work managers. The relevance of specialist knowledge and skills to her work was a further motivating factor.

As part of job enhancement, the agency was putting people through management qualifications, so they paid for me to do this Master's. It was very appropriate to the work that I was doing at the time...things like employment law, disciplinary procedures, hearings and so on. (K/14)

Not long after completing the Master's qualification, Kirsty moved to a new role as lecturer in higher education. Kirsty's explanation for this move was that partly that she felt 'stale' in her role, but mainly because she did not feel comfortable with the managerial direction of social work:

It was the managerial nature of how things had become, the bureaucracy and the move away from working with (people) to managing groups of people. No longer did you get to know the people you were working with to try and help - that was 'old fashioned woolly liberal nonsense'; now we were into 'managing people'. That really stuck in my throat. (K/14)

This provided a motivating factor when Kirsty began to study for a PhD to investigate practice concerns, with an aim of contributing to change through research.

It was managerialism, the 'not working with people'...which my PhD ended up being about, and that sustained me ... because I was so passionate about it, it was a real thing ... to get the opportunity to come here and look into that properly, to do some research, was a real privilege; that was why I chose to do my PhD. (K/16)



Again, financial support from the workplace was an important factor: 'that would have been a huge barrier. It didn't cost me anything, without that I wouldn't have been able to do it. If somebody else wants to do that they have to pay – (I was) privileged in this job to get that opportunity. (K/12)

As a further motivation, Kirsty conceded an interest in career progression:

Part of me as well, if I'm totally honest - I would like to be a senior lecturer at some point, so part of it was career also. There is a self-interested bit in wanting to maybe earn more money, to increase my research profile and all of that, but...if that had been the only motivator, that wouldn't have sustained me through a qualification - for me, it had to feel meaningful. (K/18)

As outcomes, Kirsty added that the managerial qualification added to her previous Social Work Master's would have helped her overall profile for a career move to higher education (HE).

The qualification was probably used to get my job (as a lecturer in HE), probably having that Master's in Social Work and one in management added to my profile, so it was useful. (K/11-16)

Kirsty also stressed the importance of learning about and applying self-analytical and reflective approaches in her work as a manager and how this gave her greater awareness of the needs and perspectives of work colleagues and team members.

I remember a self-analysis project, looking at if you were a 'task person' or more of a 'people person'. I could reflect then on things that had happened, I could see why that happened. So the practical, legal (knowledge) was all helpful, but so was that reflective personal learning. (K/14)

As a boundary factor between academic study and workplace practice, although the specialist content of her Master's degree had been relevant to her managerial role, this was seemingly not transferable to her subsequent role in higher education.

That's the qualification that I've used least subsequently, but at the time that I was doing it and had I stayed as a manager it would have been very valuable at the time. But the content, no, I haven't used it since. (K/16)

A second boundary factor was described as perceptions of study among colleagues as a privileged advantage, not related to workplace responsibilities.

When I did my MSc in my last job, there would be comments from colleagues, 'you're always on courses', you know, 'get back here and do the real work'. They see that you're doing something they're not, and that was a bit of a barrier. (K/28).

In Kirsty's experience, support from a compatible academic supervisor was significant, as was time to become 'immersed' in study. Kirsty stressed that 'being on the same wavelength' as the supervisor made a significant difference to her studies.

The other thing is you have to have the time to immerse yourself in it. Whether that's with a couple of days working at home ... when I did my work-based MSc, we had a couple of study days and on those days, I immersed myself in it; having that time is really important. (K/26)

Having selected a topic of relevance to increased managerialism in the field, outcomes and from this research was ongoing through presentation at academic conferences and publication in journals. To reach employers and practitioners, Kirsty had made contact with local authorities who contributed to the inquiry, and had offered to share copies of her study and talk to staff about the research.

One head of service in this local authority came back to me and said "we're very interested in doing this because it's so relevant; we struggle with these issues all the time". When I got feedback like that ... (knowing) it would be of use and meaning, and of relevance, was absolutely important. (K/15)

For Kirsty, motivation for study was the opportunity of employer funding for workforce development to enable her to acquire specialist knowledge and skills for her new role as manager. In her second example of motivation for doctoral study, employer funding featured, as did the potential for career progression. Her main motivation in this case had been

altruistic, with an aim to advance professional knowledge and understanding through investigation of a significant workplace concern. An outcome of Kirsty's managerial Master's had been increased qualifications, personal capabilities and professional capacity, leading to career progression. Characteristics in Kirsty's first example included study days at university, which provided peer support and time to focus on study. As a boundary factor, this had created a perceived division between work and academy, where the opportunity for study was seen as 'not work'. In her doctoral study, learning characteristics of time to become immersed in study were empathised, together with workplace applied study. These factors were coded as independent home-based study and putting learning to work respectively. Kirsty stressed the importance of interpersonal support from an empathetic supervisor and trusted colleagues as important factors of her learning. These factors were categorised as interpersonal support, a selective category which had also featured in documentary analysis, and in this example, were coded as characteristics of learning and as factors which facilitated boundary crossing between academic study and work.

Next, an example of non-concurrent working across contexts of work and academy is given, in Lisa's experience of a secondment from her workplace to work, and study, with the university.

#### 7.4.2 Lisa

Lisa had a qualifying degree in social work, and was employed as manager of a community-based organisation. Moving from an extended period of local authority social work to take up this managerial role, Lisa had been supported to undertake Master's study in organisational management. While completing the degree, she was invited to undertake part-time teaching at university, as a secondment from her post. In a similar situation to Community Education interviewee Beth, Lisa had the opportunity to cross between contexts of work and university through concurrent part-time work in two settings, which also enabled her to pursue her Master's study with the university. In addition to integrated study, teaching and work, Lisa described characteristics of learning through working with people, where a significant amount of her learning came from listening to participants and colleagues.

I learned a lot from the people I was working with, because I was no longer in a statutory role, so it was more about listening to (the client group) about what they needed, and putting gradually things in place; listening to other people in the organisation; listening to other colleagues and other members of the team. (L/40)

Lisa described the process of learning as both a personal challenge and professional transformation. As overall outcomes of her secondment, her experiences of academic study joined with teaching had given her new knowledge, skills and abilities, which had transformed her perspectives about working with people, organisational structures and her practice as a manager. Having become a manager, she had no plans for career progression to work in higher education. Instead, Lisa talked about a desire to return to work in her organisation.

When the secondment ended, Lisa did return to work. For an extended period of time the secondment had been full-time with the university. This had an effect on the organisation's perception of a division between work and academy, albeit as a second workplace. 'If I'm honest people in the organisation probably thought I wasn't going to come back, but I was very clear that I wanted to return' (L/45), Lisa explained. When she returned, she met the new director and was able to negotiate a different role with the agency.

There was a new director in place... she really thought about my experience within the organisation, my experience I'd gained at the university and the learning I'd done on my Master's, and saw the benefit of me coming back to a slightly different role. And the benefit to me, because I think the organisation clearly wanted to keep me but I think if I'd just come back to the role I was in before, I wouldn't have wanted to stay and would have looked for something else. I think it was about giving me some opportunities that were useful. (L/46)

On return to work Lisa's responsibilities in the organisation had changed, and this had been challenging.

Since I came back about two years ago, I've gradually taken on less operational responsibility and more strategic responsibility at national level. This meant I had to give up line management; now I only line manage (two members of staff) whereas I line managed everybody before. It was a huge shift, and quite hard to give up some of that as well. (L/37)

In her new remit, Lisa had more of a strategic role within the organisation and at national level, where for example she described involvement with Scottish Government Early Years policy development. Lisa's experience of her changed role reflected the analogy of the 'hero's journey' (Alleyne, 2015). In Lisa's account, although specialist organisational management knowledge and skills were not mentioned as transferable in her return to the project, increased professional capacity was noted as relevant her new strategic role.

In this account, Lisa's motivation for study had been similar to Kirsty's, in that it responded to an employer funded opportunity to advance specialist knowledge and skills, which were relevant to her managerial role. Outcomes of her secondment experience had been transformative for Lisa, where new knowledge, skills and abilities had advanced her personal and professional capabilities in working with people, and in her new capacity as a strategic manager. In Lisa's description of her learning characteristics, working with people in identifying needs and planning how to address these, were a core skills drawn from workplace experience. The opportunity of teaching part-time with the university, where Lisa was able to work across two learning contexts, presented a synergy between work and academy. A further example of boundary crossing between academy and work was represented by the process of negotiation with her director about transition from the context of working and learning in the university to new challenges of strategic management with her workplace organisation.

In the next example, Mary explained her intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for learning, and described processes of professional CPD in social work.

### 7.4.3 Mary

In this example, Mary's ongoing professional learning incorporated a range of specialist awards. Having qualified as a generic worker, Mary explained that when specialist teams brought more requirements for new awards, from her experience of learning, she became involved in training and then regulation, which led to later strategic involvement in professional CPD. As a motivation for learning, she indicated a commitment to ongoing learning and saw this as integral to social work, explaining 'I've always set a great store by continuous learning and development, it's part and parcel of the job' (M/72). Her motivation was influenced by employer funding, the opportunity to apply specialist knowledge and skills in the workplace, and to 'put learning to work' through a cascade professional development model (Kennedy, 2005).

The first thing I did was Certificate in Child Protection. The (local authority) had made the commitment to put all their child and family workers through (the certificate). The way they did it, the staff that each local authority sent to do the full diploma, they said "we'll fund you to do this, but then you will have to teach it to others". It was quite innovative, at that time. (M/72)

As a boundary between work and academy, Mary described the awards she took as valuable in their connection to work and profession, but as disconnected from academic accreditation. The Child Protection Certificate, at that time, was not transferable to a university accredited post-qualifying award at Master's Level, as Mary explained: 'unfortunately it was so new, that although it was accredited by the university, it hadn't been accredited by the post-qualifying award (M/73). This situation applied to a Practice Teaching award and a module on quality assurance, which she took later.

It was unfortunate that when you'd done all that work, it didn't actually count towards the accredited qualification. I got a lot out of it, I learned things that I should have learned in my undergraduate qualification. (M/75)

As outcomes, Mary explained that she had acquired knowledge and skills of relevance to her work. As in Flora's example in teaching, Mary described the benefit of linking practice to theory as an experienced practitioner, rather than beginning with theory, and finding its relevance to practice at a later stage. In terms of characteristics of ongoing learning, Mary explained that some awards had been university-based, and some delivered by a professional organisation.

The Child Protection Certificate was delivered by university and the practice teaching by the (area) consortium, as the precursors of the learning networks. Practice teaching was validated by CETSW, Central Council for Validation of Training in Social work. I think all of those awards were at level 10, but some of them were before SCQF. (M/75)

Mary's reference to Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 10 meant that the specialist awards were at Graduate Certificate, or honours level, whereas post-graduate study for a Master's degree was validated at Level 11. Having completed at least three specialist post-qualifying awards, Mary considered the possibility of studying for a Master's in Social Work. Instead, she chose to study a languages degree as a personal learning pursuit, unconnected with work. She explained her motivation for this and for further academic study, following a move to work in higher education.

I did a course in Spanish with the OU, and seven years later emerged with an honours degree in modern languages - for nothing other than sheer fun. If I hadn't done that I might have done a Master's in social work, but I didn't, and I don't have any regrets about that. I will probably do a PhD or professional doctorate, I haven't decided yet. (M/76)

Mary's choice to study as a leisure pursuit and her description of the OU as 'addictive' indicated an intrinsic self-motivation for learning. As a characteristic of self-selected and funded study in a subject disconnected from work, rather than learning presenting additional pressure, this study was seen as enjoyable and a balance to the demands of work.

As a further boundary between academic study and work, Mary explained her view that there were less advantages of advanced academic study for career progression in social work, as there were insufficient opportunities for promotion. 'Really the only career opportunity within social work is manager', she explained, going on to suggest other possibilities of promoted posts. 'There need to be a number of routes; there's the 'supporting others' route, and then there's the 'experienced practitioner as consultant', who could co-work with less experienced colleagues in high-end protection cases. (M/95-98)

A challenge for continuing learning was Mary's view that in times of budgetary constraint, professional learning was first to be cut.

Employers see continuous learning and development as an extra, rather than core to what we do, to professionalism, to good practice. It's always the first thing to go when money's tight ... you continue to have people trying to do their own learning, but it's difficult. We need a more flexible model. (M/112)

In this account, a consequence of austerity measures in public services was that responsibility for learning was passed from employers to individual practitioners, with reliance on workers taking responsibility for their own professional development. To support this, the professional agency for social work had developed a Continuous Learning Framework (CLF), which fed into CPD requirements of Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL). Mary explained that CLF was intended to support ongoing practitioner learning, which would then feed into PRTL as a regulatory performance management framework. To ensure organisational support, the CLF framework incorporated two sets of capabilities, one for the practitioner and for employers. This feature followed the Social Services Code of Practice in terms of linking employer responsibilities and practitioner capabilities in continuing learning. Mary noted challenges for practitioners in identifying the different purposes of the two frameworks, beyond compliance learning for registration.

PRTL is a regulatory process that (practitioners) have to go through, whereas continuous learning is something they have to take responsibility for and within that, they will easily meet their PRTL requirements. But there's a tendency to see PRTL



as the start and end point, rather than as a process by which what you are doing already as continuous learning can be recognised by the regulatory body. (M/94)

A potential boundary between profession and workplace that these connected schemes represented was the concept of individualised responsibility for evidence-based learning, where learners were required to organise and log their learning achievements against set capabilities. To facilitate an organisational learning culture, Mary saw the responsibilities identified for employers as ensuring support for learning, although indication of a set capabilities for employers suggested procedural compliance across the workforce.

In contrast, as an example of innovative synergies between profession, work and academy, Mary explained a new award for senior social work managers, which involved Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

One of the things about the award is the emphasis on recognising them as the expert in their role. It's not about new knowledge; it's more about helping them to reframe their experience (and) gaining academic credit for that as well. Up to half of the award can be RPL, in order to go on to Master's study. (M/120)

In a second example of synergies between profession, work and academy, Mary described the social work initiative of Learning Networks, located regionally throughout Scotland and staffed by co-ordinators, who acted as leaders for learning. In addition to a primary role of supporting practice learning and new practitioners, some networks developed the co-ordination of ongoing learning for all social work staff. Mary considered that Learning Networks had provided a useful professional learning conduit between practitioners, employers and the profession, and although the initiative had been discontinued due to funding cuts, 'the principle was a good one' (M/100).

Mary's experience of undertaking a series of specialist awards illustrated her motivation for learning as employer-funded opportunities to acquire specialist knowledge and skills, and to apply these in the workplace. Outcomes of this study led to teaching others through a cascade approach; from this Mary became involved in training, which became a significant aspect of her career path. Mary's example of studying for a languages degree as

intrinsically motivated, and although her experience of degree level study was non-work related, this contributed to her 'package of qualifications', which was then followed by career progression.

A unique aspect of the specialist awards in social work, accredited and in some cases delivered by a university, were apparent boundaries between academic and professional accreditation processes and qualifications. It may be that such boundaries have been addressed since Mary's experience, with the introduction of more integrated accreditation processes. As synergies between academy, workplace and profession, Mary described benefits of the former Learning Networks as leadership for learning, and interpersonal support through learning communities. An initiative promoting RPL as an academically accredited experiential learning initiative for senior managers.

In relation to professional CPD, Mary referred to the connections between the continuous learning framework and regulatory requirements in social work as beneficial to individual learners. As characteristics of profession-required continuing learning, these processes had similarities to competency and standards frameworks in education and nursing.

Next, categories are compared across the three social work respondents.

#### 7.4.3 Social work: comparison of themes

Motivation	Kirsty	Lisa	Mary
Specialist knowledge and skills	•	•	•
Employer-funded	•	•	•
Intrinsic desire for learning			•
Putting learning to work	•	•	•
Knowledge/qualification update			•
Career progression	•		
Ensuring quality			•
Learning for change	•	•	
Outcomes			
Extending personal capabilities	•	•	•
Package of qualifications	•	•	•
Building professional capacity	•	•	•
Putting learning to work	•	•	•
Characteristics			
Work-related study	•	•	•

Critical reflection	•		
Independent home-based study	•		•
Informal sharing	•	•	•
Interpersonal support	•		•
Teaching others			•
Learning communities			•
Professional competency framework			•
Boundaries			
Work-study disconnection	•		
Academy-profession division			•
Synergies			
Working across contexts		•	
Putting learning to work		•	•
Profession-work CPD			•
Leadership for learning			•
Learning communities/networks		•	•
Pathways into education			•
Profession-academy RPL			•
Interpersonal support	•		
Learning for change	•		

Table 22 Social work categories

Employer-funded academic study and learning for specialist awards were key motivational factors of continuing learning in social work, to ensure up-to-date knowledge of legislation, policy and practice. Outcomes shared by all social work participants were enhanced personal capabilities, building professional capacity, mainly through career progression; additional qualifications and applied learning, described as ‘putting learning to work’.

Characteristics of learning included professionally validated awards, continuous learning framework and mandatory reporting of professional CPD for registration. Learning contexts were described as academy and workplace, with examples of profession-led awards in Mary’s account and research for professional change in Kirsty’s response.

Boundaries were apparent in validation of specialist awards through profession and academic-specific accreditation schemes. Disassociation between profession and work did not feature in the social work group, nor was there any reference to home-study-work-imbalance. For the three participants, particular factors which may have influenced this were Kirsty’s reference to strong interpersonal support; Lisa’s secondment across study and work contexts and Mary’s choices to pursue short course specialist awards and an intrinsic choice

to pursue a languages degree. Although study was employer-funded, work-related and applied, and performative CPD frameworks were in place, there was no reference to compliance, pressure or stress in relation to continuing learning in social work. As distinctive synergies in social work, innovative links between contexts were reported, or example identification of employer roles in supporting the CLF, as a conduit between work and professional registration PRTL requirements. Further examples of boundary crossing connections were RPL links between profession-academy-work, work-academy secondment and the learning networks, which had fostered leadership for learning and learning communities. Whereas the profession promoted a learning culture, public service cuts meant that the innovative initiatives in interpersonal, reciprocal learning across contexts had been restricted. In Kirsty's example, specific reference was made to motivation towards transformational change in the profession and the significance of interpersonal support in ensuring synergy in academic research for the benefit of others in the profession and workplace.

As factors omitted in the social work group, role models were not mentioned, although interpersonal support from others featured as both a characteristic and synergy. The most significant omissions in this group were that boundaries between contexts were less apparent. Division between work and profession was not mentioned, which may indicate that professional CPD was less procedural, and that the continuing learning framework (CLF) acted as a bridge between work and the registration requirements. The second boundary was that in the social work group alone, an imbalance between work/study/home was not mentioned. This may relate to factors of motivation for learning, where altruistic motivation led Kirsty's study, intrinsic motivation was a key feature in Mary's choice of study, and for Lisa, learning across contexts may have reduced impact on independent study as home.

To conclude this chapter, the results of a text search using NVivo software carried out across all interviews are reported next. The findings of this gave a general indication of trends in terminologies used in connection to continuing learning.

### 7.5 NVivo word query: work, think, learn

To close this chapter, this section explains the coding of three terms: 'work, think, and learn' from an NVivo word search across all interview transcriptions. The findings of this text search were that the three most frequently used key words were work (n572); think (n481) and learn (n310). These were determined as word groups, ie including stems, such as working, thinking and learning. The next most important terms were people, study and job, which suggested importance of learning with and for others in professions; of academic study, and learning for employment. A selection of key terms is given in Table 23, showing the list position in the first column, the key word, and frequency of use in the third column.

Position	Key word	No (n)	Position	Key word	No (n)
1	Work	572	112	Career	47
2	Think	481	135	Values	40
3	Learn	310	141	Skills	38
6	People	296	147	Reflection	37
9	Study	242	149	Knowledge	36
10	Job	234	164	Modelling	33
25	Managing	136	188	Mentor	29
26	Qualification	135	189	Standards	29
32	Professional	123	329	Ethics	16
37	University	119	370	Competence	14
38	Master's	117	415	Collaboration	12
74	Training	69	500	Update	10
87	Experience	57	994	Apprentice	3

Table 23 NVivo word query: work, think, learn

Analysis of word groups across the interviews gave a general indication of trends in professional learning. The use of the word training, for example, was less frequent than might have been the case two decades ago, where this term was used to describe both qualifying and ongoing learning for professions (Eraut, 1994; Winch, 1998). Key words of work and associated terms of job, experience and career were used most frequently in interview accounts of professional learning. High incidence of terms describing academic learning, such as qualification, university, Master's and study was also significant, indicating an increase in thinking about continuing learning as accredited study. The terms knowledge, skills, values and reflection had a lower frequency of use than might have been expected, and collaboration, ethics or apprentice were even lower, indicating limited use of these terms in consideration of professional learning. This suggested learning through and for work was

prioritised by these respondents, and that academic study was higher on an agenda of continuing professional learning than ideas about standards, competence or update, as representative of required professional CPD. Terms such as autonomy, society, risk or power were not specifically mentioned in the interviews, suggesting limited debate about contradictions or challenges in continuing learning in relation to the complex roles of professions in society.

In the word search, the juxtaposition of the three key words 'work, think, learn' as most frequently used terms in the interviews suggested a progression from the experience of work, to thinking as active critical reflection, then to learning as personal transformation resulting from the previous two stages. The terms had resonance with Patrick Geddes's (1924) maxim by creating we think, by living we learn (UoD homepage, accessed 9.7.15), which suggests that learning is grounded in experience.

As a contribution to the findings the study, the terms 'work, think, learn' suggested a process of continuing learning represented by experience, interpretation and growth.

Next, findings of data are presented, where the outcomes of the process of grounded theory are presented in a series of statements. To show the connections between these statements and the data, cross-cutting themes between the four professions are presented in a series of tables, following Corbin and Strauss's (2008: 125) idea of 'conceptual visualisations' of data.

## Chapter 8 Findings

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented, first as cross-cutting categories identified in the semi-structured interview data, and second as findings across all data in the study. Data findings are presented in relation to the research aims of purposes (section 8.1), processes (section 8.2) and parameters (8.3). Research questions of motivation and outcomes, characteristics and contexts, and boundaries and synergies are considered in connection with relevant aims. The use of diagrams as charts has again allowed 'conceptual visualisation' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008: 125) in understanding relationships in data.

### 8.1 Purposes

The selective categories as motivation for learning across the four professions are shown in Figure 13.

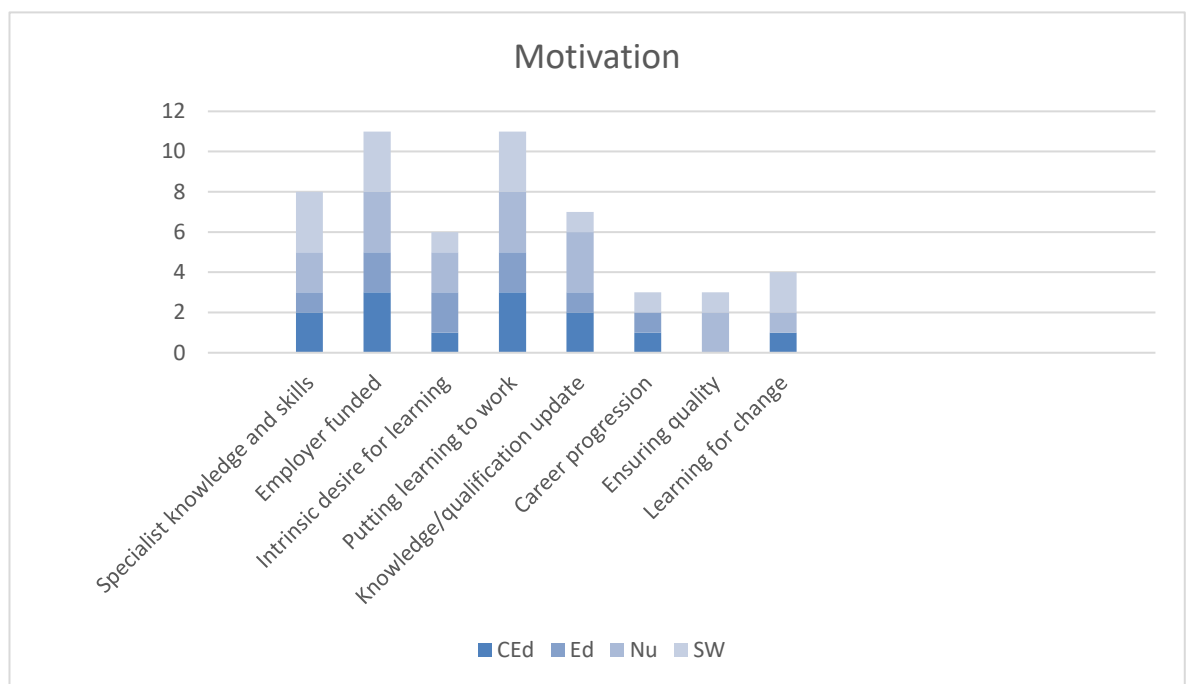


Figure 13 Motivations across professions

Five motivational factors were shared across the four professions. The most significant were employer funding for workforce development, and putting learning to work. The latter phrase was used in coding the documentary analysis, and was adapted from Porritt's (2014:79) idea of 'putting knowledge to work', where motivation for learning was to apply learning in the

workplace for the benefit of participants in services and work colleagues. Motivation as an aim of updating knowledge and skills or an academic qualification was more significant in nursing than other professions, where a move to degree-entry in 2013 influenced ongoing learning as academic study. A core motivation for social work was gaining specialist knowledge and skills which featured in relation to a management upskilling and profession-specific awards. An intrinsic desire for learning featured in nursing and education, where respondents in both settings explained that continuing learning was integral to their construct of professional practice. Learning for change featured in social work, community education and nursing either as action research or as a goal of transformative learning. Quality assurance and career progression featured as the lowest number of responses. Quality assurance was recognised particularly in nursing as essential to public safety and in social work with regard to statutory responsibilities of registered professionals. In the lowest category of responses, one respondent in each of the social work, education and community education groups gave career progression as a motivation, almost as an afterthought in two cases, and as a progressive career plan in a third.

Next, the extent to which motivational factors were reflected in outcomes is presented. As a comparison between interviews and documentary data, outcomes of learning were summarised as follows.

- Extending personal capabilities
- Building professional capacity
- Putting learning to work
- Ensuring quality

In the professional interviews, outcomes of learning related to the first three of these categories. These were: 'extending personal capabilities' and 'building professional capacity' as outcomes resulting mainly from study; and 'putting learning to work', as learning which had been applied in the workplace for the benefit of others. In the documentary data, 'ensuring quality' was referred to as a motivational factor, whereas in interview data this was noted as a procedural characteristic, rather than as an outcome of learning. A comparison of outcomes indicated in interview data across the four professions is given in Figure 14.



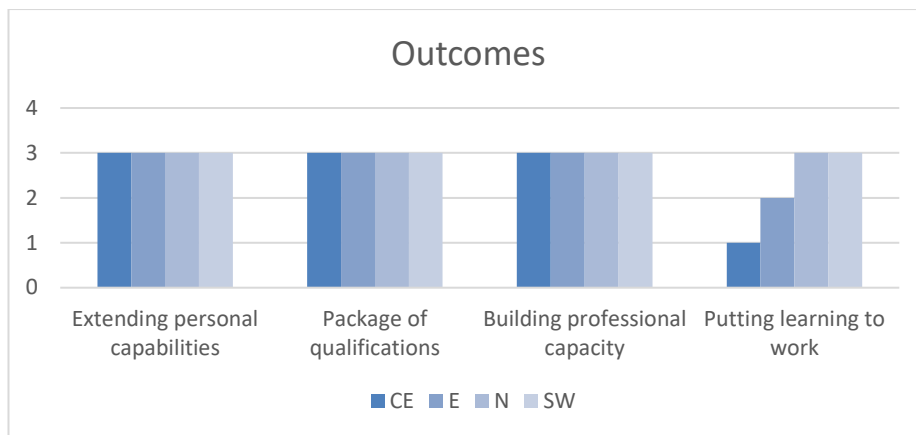


Figure 14 Outcomes across professions

In this figure, more uniformity of responses across outcomes and professions was apparent. The responses coded as personal capabilities included insight, understanding; reflection, critical thinking, confidence, self-belief, transferable skills (taken to mean graduate attributes, eg QAA, 2011), achievement and responsibility, and professional capacity included responses of career progression and/or further study. Responses coded as putting learning to work included workplace-applied research, attaining knowledge and skills (in this data, both specialist knowledge and knowledge update), organisational change, change for colleagues and/or clients, and dissemination of research to others.

In the semi-structured interviews, enhanced personal capabilities, professional capacity and adding credentials to a 'package of qualifications' were represented as outcomes for all respondents. Whereas motivation for workplace-applied learning featured across all professions, this was not reflected as a key outcome in community education or education groups. Reasons for this may have related to a career move after study (less applicable in nursing and social work), or in education, a lack of opportunity for implementation of change initiatives in school. In the professions where motivations and outcomes were aligned, this may reflect specialist learning in social work (eg management, specialised awards) and in nursing, the application of action research and collaborative learning approaches, where respondents seemed to have more responsibility for teaching others and implementing change. In the latter case this may be related to a managerial role of respondents also reflected in Chris's account. It may also stem from a collegiate learning culture in nursing,

where it was explained that teaching others was a requirement, 'not an optional extra' (J/50). This approach featured in characteristics of learning, compared in the next section, after a summary of outcomes, and findings for this section of the study. Outcomes of learning were initially grouped in four categories of 'enhancing personal capabilities', adding to a 'package of qualifications', 'career progression' and 'putting learning to work'. By merging categories, the three main outcomes of learning across the interview data were

- Enhancing personal capabilities
- Building professional capacity
- Putting learning to work.

#### 8.1.1 Findings: motivation and outcomes

To conclude this section, findings of the study with regard to purposes of continuing professional learning, described as motivation and outcomes, were as follows.

- i. Intrinsic motivation for learning as self-actualisation in professional contexts resulted in outcomes of enhanced personal capabilities and continued learning as growth.
- ii. Motivation for academic study was predominantly extrinsic and led by employer funding for workforce development. Outcomes of study were mainly individualised, as enhanced personal capabilities, and increase in qualifications and career progression, described collectively as building professional capacity.
- iii. Motivation for professional CPD was represented by extrinsic requirements for professional quality assurance and registration. Outcomes in three professions were consideration of professional CPD as procedural accountability rather than as opportunities for continuing learning.
- iv. Altruistic motivation for continuing learning in professions was represented as putting learning to work for the benefit of others, and as learning for change, of benefit to the wider constituents of the profession. Outcomes of this form of motivation were represented mainly as aspirational or in examples of the CT scheme or learning networks, no longer in use.

## 8.2 Processes

As processes of continuing learning, characteristics and contexts in the interview data were compared across professions. Contexts for learning were determined as academy, work and profession in section 1.6 (Figure 3) of the study. In this section, a comparison of characteristics by profession is illustrated in Figure 15.

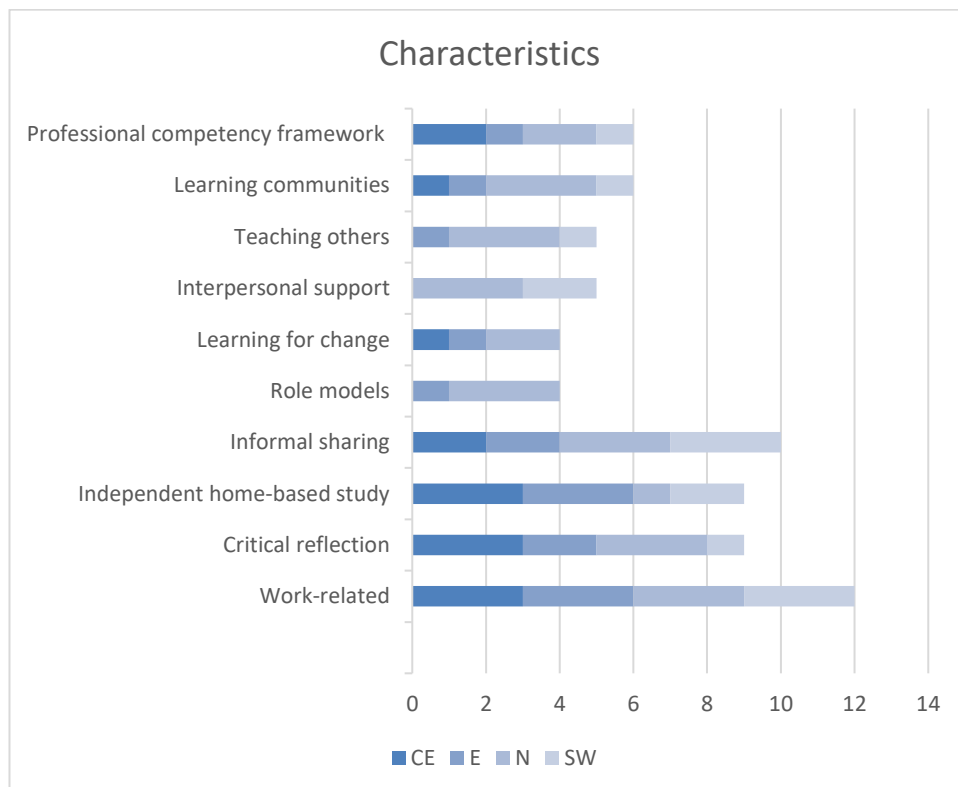


Figure 15 Characteristics across professions

Characteristics noted across professions were coded as work-related knowledge and skills, critical reflection, independent work-based study, informal sharing, role models, learning for change, interpersonal support, teaching others, learning communities, and professional competency frameworks. The term 'work-related knowledge and skills' was used to make a distinction between learning which might relate to specialist knowledge and skills, for example legislation or clinical skills, and learning for change, as transformative, participative learning stemming from altruistic motivation. Interestingly, a key category of putting learning to work, as an altruistic motivation for learning applied to or within work for the benefit of others, did not seem to feature as an enacted characteristic. Comparison of learning

characteristics seemed to show more variations between the four professional groups. All groups mentioned professional competency frameworks, but these did not feature as main characteristics of learning, particularly in these examples, in education or social work.

Independent study and informal shared learning indicated different approaches; where the former was higher, ie in education and community education, the latter was less apparent. Conversely, in nursing and social work, more informal, interpersonal communication and tacit learning, and less independent study was reported. This difference was also notable in comparing boundaries, where these two professions did not indicate a work/study/home imbalance.

Key points of difference in approaches to learning were apparent in nursing, where interpersonal support, learning communities, teaching others, role models, critical reflection and informal sharing (a term used in the data, applied here to describe Polanyi's (1967) idea of tacit learning) were more significant than in other professions. Conversely, independent home-based study and professional competency frameworks were of less significance to nursing. Learning for change as a study approach, as in for example, participator action research, seemingly of lower importance in nursing, was nonetheless more relevant here than in the other three professions. In terms of interpersonal communication, observation and tacit learning, role models were significant in education, whereas support from colleagues and tutors was recognised as important in social work. It was surprising to note the lack of communication with others as a form of ongoing learning in the responses. In the documentary data, interpersonal support for learning was used as a collective category for responses, where support for learning included tutors, work colleagues, managers, other students, family, and clients, participants, students or patients. In the documents, this category was used in terms of boundary crossing, where support from the academy, workplace or personal life not only concerned the achievement of learning objectives but facilitated negotiation between learning contexts. Where this analysis has reported learning communities, role models, informal sharing and teaching others as separate categories to draw out any unique circumstances, these categories can be categorised collectively as interpersonal communication. This amended the documentary category of interpersonal

support to include characteristics of role model observation, informal sharing, tacit learning and learning communities or networks as opportunities for shared critical analysis and dialogue. In the findings, where the term 'professional competency framework', was used in the data analysis, in the findings this is described to a conceptual category of professional accountability. The key categories of learning characteristics noted in the study were:

- Work-related knowledge and skills
- Critical reflection
- Professional accountability
- Interpersonal communication
- Learning for change

Next, comparisons between professions are reported with regard to contexts for learning. In the study, contexts of learning were determined at an early stage in data analysis as academy, profession and work. It seemed important to clarify these distinctions from the outset, particularly in relation to consideration of boundaries and synergies between contexts. At this stage in reporting findings, the main contexts of learning were confirmed as different activity systems, in order of significance as follows.

- Work was represented by paid employment in one or more workplace, where opportunities for ongoing formal and informal learning were available.
- Academy was represented by part-time work-based study, mainly paid for by employers, and provided and accredited by a higher education institution.
- Profession was represented in three professional groups by registration procedures and continuing professional development, structured and monitored by the professional agency. In order to practice, practitioners were required to annually complete 35 or 90 hours of CPD, record levels of competency and pay a registration fee. This enabled annual re-registration as a requirement of continued practice. In the fourth professional group, this process was under development.

In the study, additional reference was made to wider contexts of families, communities and societies. Accepting that these contexts had not formed core aspects of empirical research, they were recognised as significant sources of influence, motivation and support to ongoing learning.

#### 8.2.1 Findings: characteristics and contexts

To conclude this section, the main findings concerning characteristics and contexts of learning were as follows.

- i. The workplace as a learning context was represented by characteristics of work-related knowledge and skills; critical reflection; dialogical interpersonal communication, experiential and tacit learning, and transformative learning for change.
- ii. The academic context for learning was recognised a provider of accredited ongoing learning which involved five characteristics: i) acquisition of knowledge and skills; ii) critical thinking and inquiry skills; iii) workplace-applied study; iv) independent home-based study and v) interpersonal communication.
- iii. The professional context for continuing learning was represented by of professional accountability in completing CPD requirements and evidencing competency, in the majority of professional groups as mandatory for ongoing registration and practice.

Next, comparisons across professions in parameters, as boundaries between contexts, and synergies as means of crossing boundaries, are discussed.

### 8.3 Parameters

Boundaries noted in the data were coded in four selective categories, as work-study disconnection; academy-profession division; work-profession disassociation, and work-home-study imbalance, shown in Figure 16.

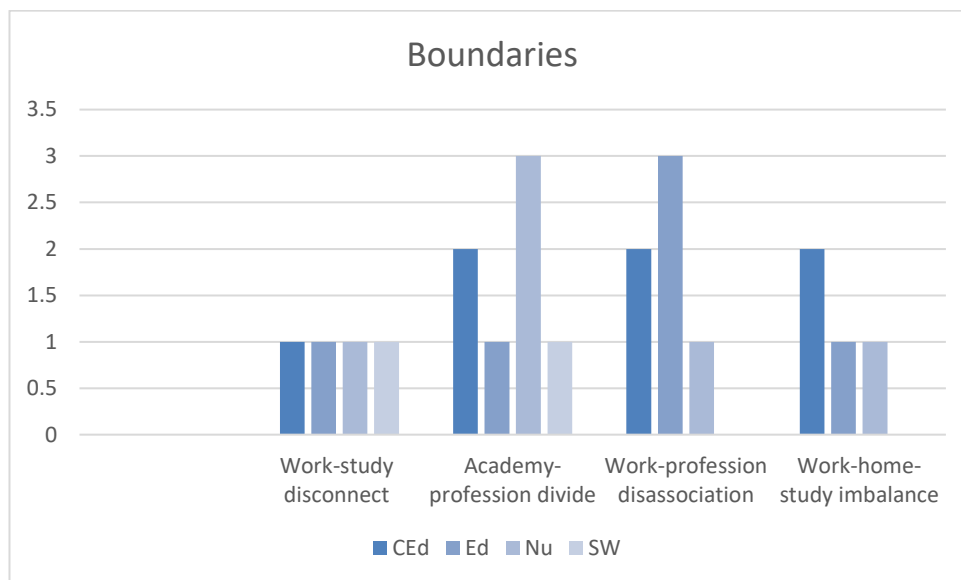


Figure 16 Boundaries across professions

In this comparison, there was limited indication of disconnection between work and study, where this was reported by one participant in each case. This mainly concerned a lack of support from workplace managers or colleagues, and a perception of study as a personal rather than workplace pursuit. Where employer support for study was apparent in nursing and social work, managerial support in education and community education seemed limited, where study was carried out at home or 'under the radar'. A higher incidence of academy-profession division was reported in nursing, in relation to the debate about degree entry, which was a relatively recent change in this profession. Boundaries between work and profession were apparent in community education and education, and to a lesser extent in nursing. In education and nursing, this boundary represented recurrence of the idea that professional competency frameworks were a procedural 'tick-box' exercise, where a set time span of 35 hours or five days for required CPD per year was perceived as tokenistic. In reporting boundaries between work, study and home, as discussed in the previous section,

this seemed to more of a concern in community education respondents. As Anna reported, time to study was a key problem, where she had described study as ‘incredibly stressful, because the working day is so busy’. She had explained that with young children, to study at home meant that ‘I’m doing it at six o clock in the morning, I’m doing it at weekends’ (A/98-99). In social work, Kirsty had explained that absolute concentration on study was essential: ‘having that time to really immerse yourself in study is really important’ (K/27).

The main boundary categories, as detailed in Figure 16, were divisions between work-profession; academy-profession; academy-work and work-study-home. In the categories, the term study represented ‘academy’ in two cases. These categories are summarised as

- Work-academy disconnection
- Work-profession disassociation
- Academy-profession division
- Work-home-study imbalance

Next, synergies, as ways of crossing boundaries between contexts, are reported.

In terms of synergies, there were more profession-distinct examples than initiatives shared across all professions. The main factors of synergy between contexts shared across all four professions was interpersonal support and reciprocity, apparent in communicative and participative learning characteristics which linked work and study. These included learning from role models, learning communities, informal sharing, and teaching others. The incidence of synergies described in the four professions is compared in Figure 17.

Organisational reciprocity, described as working across contexts, was apparent in social work and community education, where examples of part-time work in two settings and secondment from work to university, represented boundary crossing between work and academy. Links between academy and work were noted in education as participation in learning communities, study groups and conferences, described by Emma and Flora.



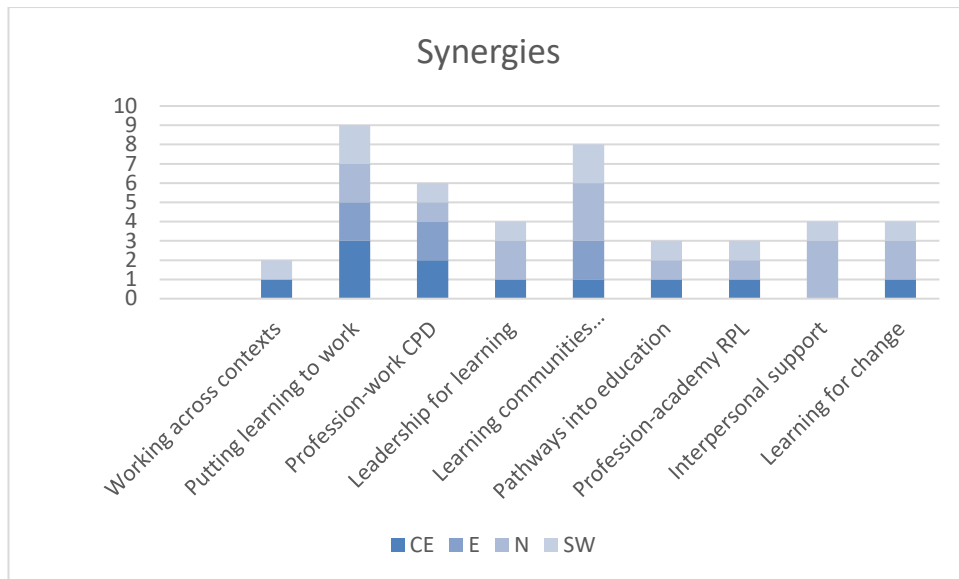


Figure 17 Synergies across professions

In social work, RPL was indicated as means of co-accreditation of learning, strengthening links between work and academy. The learning networks in social work, as previously discussed, represented leadership for learning, learning communities and interpersonal support, as potential synergies between work and professional CPD, and where relevant, to academic study. A synergy between work and study was apparent in processes of action research described in both nursing and community education, where putting learning to work became a process of learning for change.

In summary, synergies as selective categories were:

- Working across contexts
- Profession-work CPD
- Interpersonal support for work and study
- Leadership for learning
- Learning communities and networks
- Accreditation of experiential learning as RPL
- Pathways into education
- Putting learning to work
- Learning for change

### 8.3.1 Findings: boundaries and synergies

Next, the findings of the research questions regarding boundaries and synergies are reported.

- i. Boundaries between profession and academy were apparent, where the validation of professional awards was described as non-transferable to academic SCQF credit.
- ii. Disconnection between work and academic study was noted in three ways: i) as differences between mediation and assessment processes and the practices of work. ii) a distinction was made between academic and practice skills and ethical behaviours learned in the workplace. iii) accreditation of experiential learning as RPL seemed underreported in the data.
- iii. Work-profession disassociation occurred where completion of competency frameworks and CPD hours was perceived as unproductive, reducing complex work practices to processes of procedural accountability.
- iv. A work-home-study imbalance was noted where independent home-based study impacted on family life, in some cases affecting relationships.

Two kinds of synergies were apparent in the data, where respondents explained their experiences of crossing learning contexts, and where aspirational proposals for boundary crossing were suggested.

These are reported as two groups of findings. First, synergies as experience are described.

- i. As a synergy between work and academy, research ideas and skills which fostered participatory action research approaches enabled applied learning as 'putting learning to work' for the benefit of others, and as transformative learning for change.
- ii. Interpersonal support of tutors, mentors, colleagues and peers created synergies in interpreting and translating cultural differences between work and study.
- iii. Organisational reciprocity was apparent in examples of workplace secondment, or working part-time in two learning contexts.

These synergies were reported in the data as recommendations:

- i. As links between work and academy, pathways into education could be enhanced through accreditation of experiential learning as RPL.
- ii. Professional CPD frameworks and academic accreditation for continuing learning could be further developed.
- iii. Leadership for learning was suggested as a means of generating collaboration across learning contexts.
- iv. Learning communities and networks were proposed as beneficial to boundary crossing between all three contexts.

This concludes findings of the empirical data, which were set out in a series of statements in relation to research aims. In this chapter, reference was made to a series of contradictions some of which created boundaries between learning contexts, presenting challenges for learners. In other cases, contradictions led to potential for synergies between contexts. These contradictions are summarised as tensions between accountability and altruism, and between individualism and reciprocity.

In the next chapter, findings are discussed in relation to theories in literature.

## Chapter 9 Discussion

In this chapter, the findings from data reported in Chapter 8 are considered in relation to the ideas set out in a review of literature on continuing professional learning in earlier chapters of the study. As in the previous chapter, the three study aims of purposes, processes and parameters are used to structure linked research questions concerning motivation and outcomes, characteristics and contexts, and boundaries and synergies of continuing professional learning. The chapter is divided into six sections, where section 9.1 concerns purposes, section 9.2, processes, and section 9.3, parameters. Drawing from discussion of these findings, the next two sections present conclusions of the study, where section 9.4 concerns the research question on trends, and section 5, the implications of necessary factors for continuing professional learning as common good in societies. A summary conclusion to the study is presented in section 9.6.

First, the purposes of learning are discussed.

### 9.1 Purposes

In this section, the research question ‘what are the motivations for and outcomes of continuing professional learning?’ is addressed.

In the data findings, motivation for continuing learning was described as intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic. In this section, these three types of motivation are discussed in relation to the outcomes of learning described in data, and to theories from literature.

The first finding, intrinsic motivation for learning as self-actualisation in professional contexts, resulted in outcomes of enhanced personal capabilities and continued learning as growth. This concurred with Maslow’s (1943; 1968; Ryan & Deci, 2000) ideas of intrinsic motivation which he argued was directed towards self-actualisation, where discovery, choice, autonomy, expansion and self-direction were factors in the process of learning. For Maslow, growth was in itself a motivating construct, where achievement generated desire for further growth and higher achievement, arguing that ‘the single holistic principle’ of motivation was that when a lower need was fulfilled, a higher need would emerge. In the data, this was reflected in a pattern of ongoing learning, particularly as academic study, where completion

of study led to a further academic challenge. This trend was apparent across all interview respondents in all professions. Intrinsic motivation as growth, Maslow argued, did not conclude with self-actualisation, but continued in a process of 'being interested, exploring, choosing and enjoying' (1968: 45). These latter terms were apparent in both documentary and interview data, where motivation as 'interest in learning' was noted (F/77/VS), echoed in motivation for learning as 'enjoyment' (D/19; G/71). The concept of an 'inquiring mind' (G/110) reflected the idea of growth as exploration, and choice was a key factor for two respondents in selecting and self-funding study. In the documents, choice was represented in selection of a work-based degree where time, place and pace of learning was learner-centred and in higher degrees, in the selection of a topic of study.

In the data, the main outcomes of intrinsic learning in the data were categorised as 'extending personal capabilities'. Where motivation was intrinsic, Maslow (1968:58) argued that outcomes would lead to 'certainty, capability, mastery, self-trust and self-esteem'. In both sets of data, similar terms were used to describe outcomes that referred to personal capabilities, such as self-motivation, confidence, insight and resilience.

As a contradiction, extending personal capabilities was also reported as an outcome of extrinsic, employer-funded learning. In this case, applying learning to work contributed to reported outcomes of insight, reflection, critical thinking, achievement and responsibility. Where outcomes of 'transferable skills' were reported; these were taken to mean the skills-based graduate attributes, such as research and inquiry, communication, collaboration and leadership (QAA, 2011). This situation may have represented a combination of intrinsic motivation as professional self-actualisation, and extrinsic drive on the part of employers for a more capable, knowledgeable, skilled workforce.

Extrinsic motivation was described by Ryan and Deci (2000:56) as driven by factors of 'rewards, deadlines, directives, threats or competition', organised and monitored externally, and perceived as indicative of learner control. In contrast to intrinsic motivation for growth and self-actualisation as higher-order learning, Maslow proposed that extrinsically driven, deficiency motivation responded to lower-order factors of need, as safety, belonging and achievement. In Figure 2, shown in section 2.3, belonging was described as affiliation to a

group; safety as security through order or law; and esteem as recognition or achievement (Maslow, 1943; 1968). In the study these factors could be identified in 'belonging' as the association of professional membership, 'safety' as adhering to regulations and ethical principles and 'esteem' as the achievement of goals set as required competences, or as required qualifications. Esteem in this instance represented the recognition of achievement by others, rather than self-esteem.

In the findings, motivation for academic study was mainly identified as extrinsic, led by employer funding, as incentives or rewards. In two cases, a motivating factor was described as financial, to meet costs of living. For others, motivation was described as pragmatic, where the opportunity to study was described as 'win-win' (H/127) for employer and employee. In education, salary incentives for teachers in the Chartered Teacher scheme were a motivating factor, and in social work, a profession-wide scheme to upskill managers presented a funded opportunity to study for Master's degree. In those examples, strategic funding for learning provided an opportunity of benefit to practitioner, employer and the profession in increasing workforce capacity. This led to a contradiction, in that completion of study for most respondents in this study had led to career progression, accepting that with one exception, this had not been a planned motivation for study. Having invested in continuing learning for employees, the benefit of extended capacity of an experienced practitioner was not then available to the profession. This situation was replicated across professions, with the exception of nursing where learning was linked to salary increase through the KSF career development scheme. In this situation, two of three participants had remained in post after Master's study. In this case, support in the workplace as a learning organisation (Senge, 1990) was indicated, with encouragement from colleagues and managers, and opportunities to implement their research across the organisation.

A second extrinsic motivation was represented by professional CPD as learning requirements for professional quality assurance. Representing Ryan and Deci's (2000) idea of motivation as a directive, completion of competency frameworks across three professions, nursing, education and social work, was a requirement of registration and ongoing practice. This form of learning also represented Maslow's (1968) ideas of lower-order motivations, of belonging, safety and collegiate esteem. In relation to the legislative responsibilities of

professions, evidence competency was also seen as a form of risk aversion where evidence of ensuring up-to-date and efficient practice represented a means of disproving professional negligence. A contradiction in this situation was that although practitioners recognised the importance of upholding professional principles and values, the methods of evidencing quality were perceived in the data as routinised and reductionist, described as procedural accountability rather than as a significant opportunity for continuing learning.

Ryan and Deci (2000) argued that where extrinsic motivation represented a continued response to external rules on the part of the practitioner, self-determination could become replaced by a need for external governance. This idea was reflected in externally determined standards, where creativity, innovation or critical thinking on the part of the professional (Ball, 2013) were replaced by reductionist, performative compliance. In the literature, there were a range of arguments against performativity in public service, not least Lyotard's concern about a drive for efficiency overtaking critical thinking: 'the goal is no longer truth, but performativity, that is, the best possible input/output equation' (Lyotard, 1984:46). Lyotard's concern was that the longer-term ideas of societal good had been reduced to short-term goals of administrative accountancy, arguing that where knowledge inputs were reduced to the requirements of specific measured outputs, rather than to the needs of society, there was insufficient reference to ethical practice. Similarly, O'Neill (2002) argued that applying performance measurements to professional work undermined both individual and organisational autonomy and professional judgement.

In a third form of altruistic motivation, Koltko-Rivera (2006) explained that this concerned acting in the interests of others in society, also described as 'altruistic beneficence, construed as effacement of self-interest' by Pellegrino & Thomasma (1993:147). Koltko-Rivera (2006) argued that whereas a level of self-actualisation represented the individual's motivation is towards realising their own potential, at a higher level of self-transcendence (Maslow, 1954) the individual's own needs were overtaken in the interests of others or of 'greater good'. This interest related to an ethical role of continuing learning in professions, where neither personal achievement nor economic gain represented defining factors of being professional. As discussed in relation to ideas of professional traits, altruism, and

responsibility were necessary factors in generating a relationship of trust in the public services acting on behalf of society (Carr, 2000; Sullivan, 1995; O'Neill, 2002).

In the data, altruistic motivation was described in terms of 'putting learning to work', as actively applying aspects of their learning in the workplace for the benefit of colleagues and service participants. 'Learning for change' indicated a wider altruistic motivation towards making a difference through learning for the profession and society it served. These processes were apparent in data categories across all four professions, where respondents referred to being professional as an experiential process, through examples of informal sharing, role models, learning communities, teaching others or participative action research.

Altruistic motivation was apparent in indications of workplace learning cultures of support and encouragement. Pellegrino & Thomasma (1993) suggested that 'altruistic beneficence', where the interests of others taken into account and the work approach could give preference to others, was a feature of an 'ethically virtuous' profession. In the study, implicit beneficence was represented by an organisational learning culture, noted as a motivational characteristic of learning in nursing and social work. Indications of altruism were apparent particularly in nursing, where supporting others was part of the job, and where collegial support contributed to a learning culture. In an organisational culture where learning support was given, this was reciprocated in helping others. In the comparison between altruistic motivation and outcomes, a contradiction was that in the main, altruistic motivating factors were espoused rather than realised. For example, the motivation for academic study as putting learning to work to benefit others was not apparent as an outcome; instead, personal capabilities, qualifications and career progression were indicated as results of study.

In this section, motivations and outcomes of continuing learning were discussed in relation to motivational factors of intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic motivation.

In the context of outcomes, a further argument was Leont'ev's (1978:61) proposal of the object of learning represented its 'true motive'. Without defined goals for learning, Leont'ev argued that outcomes might be unanticipated, as in the data examples of career progression as an outcome of study, rather than a motivation. Leont'ev's (1978) concern that fragmented learning activities could lead to the means of learning being prioritized over the end was also



reflected in a view of professional competency frameworks as tick-box activities, where the bigger picture of professionalism in espousing factors of, for example, social justice, personal commitment and professional integrity (GTCS, 2012b). Planning outcomes as integral to motivation was apparent in Porritt's (2014) idea that strategic planning and leadership were necessary factors in ensuring effective outcomes of continuing learning and development, a factor that was illustrated in Chris's example of leading change through action research. In the data examples of the Chartered Teacher scheme, planned outcomes for enhanced responsibilities for more capable teachers in schools; or in social work, planned collaboration in accrediting academic and professional awards, could have offered potential for further synergy between motivation and outcomes of learning.

In these examples, relationships between motivation, outcomes and methods of learning were apparent. In the next section, characteristics and contexts of continuing learning are discussed.

## 9.2 Processes

This section addresses the question: 'what are key characteristics and contexts of continuing professional learning?' In this section, the findings from the data and theories in literature are discussed, first in relation to characteristics which were specific to or shared between contexts (section 9.2.1), then as the three contexts of academy, work and professions (section 9.2.2).

### 9.2.1 Characteristics

In the data, core characteristics of continuing learning were identified as acquisition of work-related specialist and transferable knowledge and skills, as critical reflection, professional accountability, interpersonal communication, and as learning for change. In this discussion, it was useful to consider the potential of these characteristics as transferable to more than one context. In terms of characteristics, discussion of theories in earlier chapters positioned continuing learning in a social constructivist paradigm, where Vygotsky's (1978) factors of 'mediation, social context and development' and the role of the other in supporting learning were identified as core elements of this approach. Based on Vygotsky's ideas, it was argued that holistic learning requires both informal implicit and formal explicit processes of

mediation, and that one approach is insufficient without the other (Wertsch, 2007; Marsick & Watkins, 1990). In the findings, explicit factors of mediation could be identified as production of materials concerning the knowledge, skills and guidelines for work; the policies, principles and competency frameworks for professions, or on-line learning materials, written assessments, and certificated qualifications of academic study. Implicit mediation was apparent in transferable skills in analytical critical thinking, reflection and inquiry. Where these latter processes might be either individual or collective, Wertsch argued that whereas implicit mediation could exist as thought, it was communicated through speech. Wertsch (2007) argued that the expression of implicit mediation through language as communicative action enabled links to be made between implicit, invisible and explicit, visible forms of mediation. Wertsch's suggestion, as indicated previously, was that one form of learning was ineffective without the other, and that integration of communicative action, thought and material artefacts were necessary factors of holistic learning.

In relation to the findings of the study, Wertsch's (2007) idea of implicit mediation was represented by characteristics of 'critical reflection' and 'interpersonal communication', and explicit mediation by 'acquisition of knowledge and skills'. The application of learning in the workplace, as 'putting learning to work', reflected Vygotsky's (1978) proposal, extended by Engeström (2009), that learning is socially constructed in contexts. This latter stage was less apparent in the data, which lead to a concern that contemporary methods of continuing learning might be insufficient in terms of interpreting and advancing practice. To examine this concern, a second theoretical interest for the study was learning as a developmental process. In the literature, Bateson's (1972) ideas about learning as growth and development were considered. This helped to explain professional learning as an ongoing process, where practitioners first acquired specialist knowledge and skills, then through experience and interpretation, accommodated or rejected ideas for effective practice.

The surfacing of contradictions between habitual, routinised practice, and the external socio-economic influences on work, for example, through political socio-economic policies, represented Bateson's third stage of learning, as transformative. Key factors for learning in

this construct were first, acquisition of propositional knowledge (Sfard, 1998), second, an interpretation of habitual experience and third, critical analysis of contradictions. As an emergent and developmental process of learning, these factors corresponded to Habermas's (1971) 'technical, practical and emancipatory' interests; to Kennedy's (2005) idea of learning as 'transmission, transition and transformation', and to Aristotle's concepts of 'techne, episteme and phronēsis'. Where learning at Bateson's (1972) Level I involved accommodation of information about the practices in a given context, Level II involved questioning of the sources and structures of knowledge. This staged development was reflected in Kohlberg's (1986) model of ethical development. Similarly, it was compared to Argyris and Schön's (1974:19) models of single- or double-loop learning, explained as reproducing or contesting the 'governing variables' of a situation. A stage of 'double-loop' learning (described in the data by Gerda as having 'an inquiring mind') could then lead to a Level III change in the determining factors of the context.

In relation to the findings of the data, Level 1 learning was reported as 'acquisition of knowledge and skills', Level II as 'critical analysis and inquiry', and Level III as the transformative stage of 'putting learning to work', and 'learning for change'. In these findings, it was apparent that without stages of active experience or change, learning could remain at Level I. In the data, Level I propositional knowledge as 'knowing that', was represented in knowledge and skills in work, profession or academy. Critical analysis of the habitual practices of work represented Level II learning, where skills of reflection represented the application of academic learning to work. 'Learning for change' as a data finding which reflected Bateson's Level III, represented a synergy between academic ideas of participative action research, critical thinking, leadership for learning and the active experience of workplace development.

In the literature, although Vygotsky's (1978), Engeström's (2001) and Bateson's (1972) ideas provided insight into learning as a socially constructed, developmental process across contexts, these ideas did not sufficiently explain the ways in which ethical deliberation or professional judgement was learned through ongoing professional practice. In reviewing this

aspect of professional learning, Aristotle's process of developing *phronēsis* (Flyvbjerg, 2001) was examined, together with series of theoretical models of ethical learning. In Aristotle's concept of *phronēsis*, neither propositional knowledge nor experience alone were sufficient in becoming an expert in a particular field. Necessary conditions for achieving expertise as artistry were 'inculcation of habit' (Winch, 1998) derived from experience over time, through applying knowledge and skills in socially constructed contexts. Addressing dilemmas enabled the practice of deliberation, and through experience, enabled development of deliberative judgement. Mastery, as the ability to teach others, followed artistry in development of *phronēsis*. For Aristotle, a necessary condition of *phronēsis* was the goal of common good. This meant that planning the outcomes of learning, the implications of wider, holistic societal benefits were considered to be most significant, rather than divided aspects of work as in Leont'ev's (1978) fractionalised competencies.

In the data, ideas of ethical learning, or about the development of professional judgement were under-reported. Where professions have a pact with society to deliver specialist services and maintain levels and standards of quality, it would seem appropriate that debating ways in which ethics are understood, formed and enacted would be a key factor in the advancement of professional practice. Yet it seems that ethics play a restricted role in professional learning. In UK social work, Banks (2014) indicated an expanding interest in ethics from the 1990s, but argued a tendency towards responding to codes of practice and regulation of conduct, resulting from influences of neoliberalism and organisational managerialism in public service professions (Evetts, 2013). This latter process of managerialism in professions, Banks argued, had increasingly taken precedence over a moral agency perspective of autonomous ethical practice towards equalities and social justice. In models of ethical learning, Cottone (2001) suggested that all ethical decisions are by necessity socially constructed. Similarly, in Durkheim's (1958) perspective of how ethics are formed in professions, collective interaction was proposed as a necessary condition. These factors suggested that communication with others in the dialogical analysis of professional dilemmas was essential to the formation of ethical principles. This meant that individual reflection was not sufficient as a means of learning through experience, but that

critical analysis through dialogue through the data finding of 'interpersonal communication' preceded individual thought. In professional practice, learning through experience, followed by critical analysis of experience, first through interpersonal dialogue and then intrapersonal reflection, leads to a stage of deliberation as planning further action. Deliberation, as a stage of reflection *for* action, following Aristotle, might be individual, or where a problem was too great for one person, might require communication with others. From the literature and data on ethical learning, these stages, as necessary factors of continuing ethical learning in professional practice are presented in Figure 18.

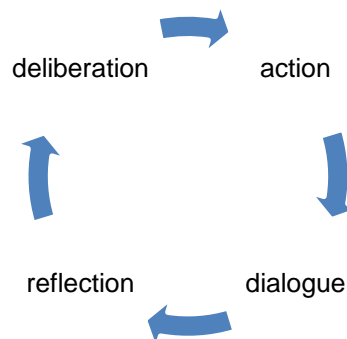


Figure 18 Necessary factors of transformative ethical learning

In this format, individual reflection as experiential learning is insufficient in determining the right thing to do, in the right way, at the right time, in Aristotle's concept of *phronēsis*. Rather, interpersonal communication as dialogical reflective analysis allows the learner to select and make sense of ideas before accommodating, assimilating or rejecting these through individual reflective thinking. This followed Vygotsky's (1978) proposal that interpersonal interaction with others precedes intrapersonal internalisation of thought. These ideas followed both Bateson's (1972) ecological idea of learning through selection, habit and change through interpretation of contradictions, and Aristotle's proposal of experience linked with theory, as a foundation for deliberation, in the process of developing mastery and wise judgement. Whereas both these constructs involved situated practice in a context for learning, a difference, drawn from findings and discussion of the study, was the necessary role of interpersonal communication at a stage of dialogical reflective analysis and depending on the scale of the dilemma, as deliberation for future action.

To conclude this section, the characteristics determined as findings of the NVivo text search are discussed. The key terms 'work, think, learn' proposed that in learning, work as experience precedes thought, as interpretation. If experience is considered as interpersonal, participatory and collaborative, and interpretation as critical analysis and inquiry representative of study, then a combination of these processes as 'putting learning to work;' become necessary factors in the social construction of continuing learning. From these connections between social constructivist and ethical learning theories and emerging categories in the research data, it was suggested that these ideas represented learning as experience, interpretation and growth. These aspects of learning can be linked to knowing that, as propositional knowledge, knowing how, as skills developed through active experience and knowing why, as a critical interpretation of situated contradictions. 'Insightful awareness' as a process of transformation, was described in the data as 'insight'; 'new awareness' (F/PS/1; F/PS/12), or a 'light bulb moment' (F/334). These connect to the concept of abductive reasoning (Svennevig, 2001), as a 'leap of faith' in reasoning, and with Aristotle's idea of abduction as the string which 'joins pearls' (Aristotle, cited in Givón; 1989:286). Insightful awareness then represents transformative learning, as growth.

Next, contexts of learning are considered.

### 9.2.2 Contexts

In discussion of contexts for learning, the interest for the study is not only what motivations and outcomes of learning may be identified for learners, and what characteristics of learning are described as continuing professional learning, but what socio-economic and political influences have changed the ways in which ongoing professional learning has been perceived in society. Freire's (1970) assertion, stated in the rationale for the study, stated that critical analysis of 'what, how, for whom, and to what end?' was necessary to surface contradictory influences of power and control in the contexts of ongoing learning.

The introduction to the study identified three main learning contexts as academy, profession and work. In the literature for the study, these contexts were studied first as historical

influences of powerful medieval universities and as guild workshops, providing specialist workplace knowledge and training through apprenticeship, and in the later, twentieth century identification of a series of professional traits which defined professions (Flexner, 2015; Sullivan, 1995). These socially constructed locations for study, work and professional association offered insight into some of the traditions on which contemporary academies, workplaces and professions were built. In the eighteenth century, the influences of Adam Smith's eighteenth century *Wealth of Nations* added free market principles to divisions in labour, where societies were further divided by individualised commercial rewards. Without the balance of 'mutual sympathy', in this respect, ethical processes of work were suppressed by goals of economic gain.

In twentieth century UK, neoliberalist free market policies of Thatcherism contributed to significant changes in the structures of work. Economic recession with loss of industry, unemployment, cuts in public services were accompanied by a rise in individualism and consumerism, societal division and a move from social responsibility to moral control (Ledwith & Springett, 2010). Professions were perceived as elitist, where 'power, privilege and pretensions' (Perkin, 1990) afforded certain groups in society more privilege than others. On the other hand, marketisation of professions as public services led to increased pressure to conform to government directives, in order to maintain services and retain jobs. This created difficult challenges for public sector professions, who were required to restructure and deliver education, health and social services as competitive cost-effective models (Giddens, 2009). Part of this move was the introduction of industrial performance measurement techniques based on division of labour, where the practitioner was assessed on the completion of specific tasks. Where this technical standardised process has been applied to professional practice in public services, it has been criticised by authors as inappropriate and ineffective (*inter alia*, Lyotard, 1984; Ball, 2013; O'Neill, 2002). This process was exacerbated by an increase in managerialism, where Scanlon (2011:3) argued that efficiencies were prioritised over effectiveness, resulting in 'accountability, surveillance and control'. A consequence of marketisation and managerialism has been a decline in ethical autonomy for professions and professionals (Evetts, 2013; Banks, 2014).

These concerns were apparent in the empirical findings in the study. In the professional context for continuing learning, professional accountability through monitoring and evidencing practice were indicated as underpinning processes of determining competency. In three professions, evidence-based practice competency and an account of self-directed learning, together termed CPD, were regulatory aspects of licence to practice. In the medieval trade guilds, a staged apprenticeship lasted for seven to nine years, a timescale which was compared with Ericsson, Prietula & Cokely's (2007) suggestion that any form of expertise required 10,000 hours of supported practice. Where contemporary professional learning had an annual requirement of 35 hours, presumably this did not take account of Polanyi's (1967) tacit learning, or Wertsch's (2007) idea of learning through tacit and explicit forms of mediation in everyday work. The process of evaluating practice was seemingly detached from learning, and accounting for a set number of CPD hours was given low priority by respondents, described as 'tick-box', even a 'waste of time' by respondents. In professions, ongoing requirements to demonstrate competence against standards followed a similar process to that of prequalifying assessment in validating programmes, indicating a deficit assessment of professional practice, as opposed to expansive learning.

With regard to the context of academy as a context for learning, from the industrial revolution to the present day, education has been the pathway to professional employment prospects, which could offer job security with higher economic and societal status (Bourdieu, 1986), in addition to choosing a career that contributed to public good. To enter the professions meant studying for an academic degree, and this meant achieving sufficient qualifications through formal schooling. To retain positions of power in societies, both university and professions were able to restrict entry or allow membership through the acquisition of qualifying credentials (Giddens & Sutton, 2013). Eraut (1994) argued that where the universities validate the necessary credentials for entry to professions, they occupy a more powerful societal position, which creates a tension with professions, who are responsible for the ethical and skilled expertise of practitioners acting on behalf of society in delivering public services. In continuing learning, this tension is apparent for the practitioners who have to comply with the performance measurement activities of professions, and at the same time



undertake further academic study to keep up with professional requirements for advanced credentials.

In the data, it was apparent that increased academic study as continuing learning was fuelled by an insecure jobs market, where practitioners saw benefits of acquiring further qualifications as job security and future-proofing their careers. For employers, academic study as continuing development represented a shift in responsibility for learning from the employer to the practitioner, where it was more cost-effective for employers to pay fees for practitioners to undertake advanced qualifications, than to provide professional training across the profession. Increased personal responsibility for learning both contributed to and relied on a blurred boundary between personal and professional responsibilities for study. This applied where study was no longer a choice, but a requirement of contemporary work, with expectations that study would be carried out in non-work time. A 'stick and carrot' approach applied by employers was either payment of academic fees, increased salary on completion of study or a combination of both. This situation contributed to tension between organisational workforce development and personal advantage represented by the academic credential. Where the aim of employer support was to increase workforce knowledge, skills and capacity, this was not necessarily accompanied by a promotion or change in workplace responsibility for the learner. In this situation, there was a contradiction between employer motivation of workforce development, and practitioner advantage of career progression.

The data indicated the academic context as providing accredited ongoing learning which involved the acquisition of knowledge and skills; and in this study, workplace-applied study. As significant factors for transferable personal capabilities, critical thinking and inquiry skills and interpersonal communication were noted in the data. Interpersonal communication in this instance referred not only to ways in which learners were supported by tutors or colleagues, but processes of reciprocal learning, though teaching others, and dialogue of participation in shared learning communities.

In this discussion, a contradiction between professional accountability and altruism as a core purpose of professional practice was noted as a finding of the study, based on a review of

literature and the data in the study. This extends Fournier's (1999) that organisations could not at the same time be autonomous and accountable, and that these two concepts were opposing and contradictory. In Fournier's concern, a key problem with accountability as a dominant discourse was that autonomy in exercising ethical judgement becomes subordinate to compliance and control. In this way, accountability similarly suppresses altruism as a motivational factor for professional practice which is enacted as *phronēsis* (Maslow, 1968; Flyvbjerg, 2001).

### 9.3 Parameters

This section addresses the question 'what boundaries and synergies can be identified between continuing learning contexts? First, findings relating to boundaries are reported and second, synergies as ways of crossing boundaries are discussed.

#### 9.3.1 Boundaries

Explaining processes of learning as socially constructed, Engeström's (2001) cultural-historical activity systems extended Vygotsky's (1978) concept of mediation to social contexts, where learning processes were governed by specific principles, rules, activities, relationships and ways of communicating. Engeström's ideas offered a way to examine different learning contexts for professional learning as unique systems of activity, which, in order to specify their uniqueness, created boundaries which determined eligibility for membership or exclusion.

This followed Edwards' (2010:43) suggestion that in professions, boundaries concerning 'power, resources and identities' were social constructed around specified interactions and the 'knowledge and meaning systems which determine inclusion or exclusion from those interactions'. In order to create change, Engeström proposed that the concept of contradiction, either within or between boundaries, presented a catalyst for transformation (Engeström, 2009). This notion had been developed from Bateson's (1972) theory that contradiction between habitual, socially constructed practices, and an awareness of the social influences on that construction of practices (as in the allegory of Plato's cave, pp115-116), would lead to new, enlightened and transformed perspectives. For individual learners,

this was described in the data as insight or awareness; in the data analysis, as a process of abductive reasoning, and in the literature as dialectic reasoning, where the principle of contradiction was that two dialectically opposed ideas could not at the same time be true.

Contradictions surfaced in boundaries experienced by respondents between the three contexts of learning, presented opportunities for transformative learning. This concept was central to the work of Engeström (2009) and Bateson (1972) and was discussed as a core feature of learning in discussion of literature. In Bateson's (1972) learning process, contradiction was essential in order to surface dialectic differences between learning drawn from acquired transmitted learning, and from tacit participative experience.

Boundaries between learning contexts in the data were described in four ways, as factors which created disassociation between contexts of work and academy; between work and profession; between profession and academy, and as an imbalance between work, study and home life. In a first boundary theme, where academic knowledge involved the acquisition and analysis of propositional knowledge, and the workplace required situated experiential process knowledge, skills and values, there were differences indicated by respondents where specialist knowledge was less transferable across work contexts. This meant that over extended periods of time, knowledge accumulated through study was not put to use in a new work situation. In Bateson's (1972) levels of learning, propositional knowledge was identified as an initial level of acquiring, accommodating and assimilating knowledge that then presented a foundation for interpretation and application. However, if there was no opportunity to apply new propositional knowledge, then this stage would be restricted, as would Bateson's further stages of contradiction, critical challenge and transformation. What this suggests is that the concept of 'putting learning to work' can create more effective, meaningful synergies between work and study. Study which was not work-related, or no longer relevant to work, where practitioners had moved to new jobs, nonetheless had outcomes of extending personal capabilities and professional capacity.

As a second boundary, as discussed in other sections, the professional competency framework and associated CPD hours seemed to disconnect learning through work from professional accountability. Complex everyday dilemmas, discussions, resolutions and

actions as tacit learning (Polanyi, 1967) did not seem to feature as learning, in the standardisation and measurement of work. Lyotard (1984) had argued a 'law of contradiction' as an increasing tension between the demands of first-order work, as direct engagement with participants, service users, patients or students; and the performative requirements of second-order work, as monitoring and reporting performance. The increased demands of both modes of work, he argued, created 'transaction costs' of time and energy, which impacted on the worker and the quality of their work. As further research, it would be interesting to investigate the time required to complete first- and second-order work, or as undertaking learning as third-order work, and mainly administrative technological tasks as fourth-order work. This problem of time as a boundary factor is revisited in discussion of boundary as imbalance between work, study and home life.

A concern about reducing learning through work to performative individualised competencies were contradictions between accountability and altruism, and between individualism and reciprocity identified in discussion of contexts of learning. In community education, this contradiction was highlighted as a boundary factor in connection with debates about the prospect of individual, mandatory evaluative competency frameworks and registration leading to 'fragmented, individualised professionalism', of particular concern in a profession which espoused collaborative and participative inclusive learning. In terms of the significance of collectivity to the formation of ethics in professions, Durkheim's (1958) perspective was that was that a fundamental condition for ethical professions was their collective nature and the cohesive, reciprocal inter-relationships of membership.

In the third boundary, the forms of mediation accredited by profession or academy were reported as incompatible, as in Wertsch's (2007) idea of explicit mediation. A difference in processes of accreditation was indicated where professional awards were not transferable to academic credit. This was an example of the different processes of mediation, in this case assessment, as boundary of monopoly. In this example, a boundary factor could be established by the profession to protect their role of in determining the quality of practitioners, or by the academy in determining levels of academic credibility. In either case, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) allows providers to correlate

different qualifications, in the interests of workforce development. This factor was also discussed in the data as a potential synergy, in connection to RPL.

A fourth boundary theme was identified as imbalance between work, study and personal life. This created a situation where increased continuing learning, mainly identified as academic study, created undue pressure on personal, or home life. An education report on enhancing teacher professionalism (Scottish Government, 2011:20) had noted that teachers used personal time to carry out CPD: 'as is the norm in most professions, teachers presently use weekends, evenings and other personal time to engage in CPD ... we know that many teachers undertake CPD during holiday periods'. Where the report considered that this approach to CPD was beneficial as 'an essential professional obligation', the report continued, 'in line with our view of professionalism, we do not believe that this (use of holidays) should be made a contractual requirement at this time'. In this extract, two assumptions were that i) using personal time for CPD is the norm for most professions, and ii) that using non-work time for work-related learning could be considered at some stage as a contractual requirement. In this example, boundary crossing was apparent between home life, work and study, and this could have challenging consequences. Two respondents talked about changes in personal relationships during the course of their studies; for one, this was directly related to the demands of study. A third explained that to balance family and work time, fitting in study was at times an 'an intense struggle'. Accepting that study was not highlighted as a major factor of stress in the data, the identification of an imbalance as a boundary factor between work, study and home is nonetheless a significant concern for professionals. It resonated with Ball's (2013: 60) indication of the effects of performativity in education, where he argued that 'increased paperwork, systems maintenance and report production in work', was adding to 'emotional pressures and stress related to work' and 'changed social relationships' in the workplace. Similarly, where study becomes an expectation or requirement of work, then an imbalance between work and home could result. In Lyotard's (1984) idea of contradiction between first-order, frontline work and second-order evaluative reporting, it could be argued that continuing learning as study becomes a third-order requirement. If there is insufficient time to deal with the increased intensities of

performativity in the workplace, then it is inevitable that either, or both, second- and third-order work may spill over into home life, with a potential impact on personal relationships.

### 9.3.2 Synergies

As a synergy between work and academy, research approaches and skills which fostered participatory action research enabled applied learning as 'putting learning to work' for the benefit of others, and as transformative learning for change.

Transferable processes of inquiry and critical thinking were categories identified as synergies of learning which enhanced individual capacity. These processes were also recognisable as outcomes of increased insight, confidence and resilience, which in turn helped practitioners to make transitions between contexts of work and learning. Synergies proposed in the data suggested that process knowledge, as critical thinking, reflection and inquiry, was transferable across learning contexts, and in career progression, where specialist propositional knowledge had been less transferable. This supported the idea that flexible, adaptable and creative meta-learning approaches (Schön, 1973, 1983; Illeris, 2002; Hargreaves, 2006) could help professionals to respond more effectively to the complexities of changing knowledge and practices. This concept of adaptability is discussed further as a necessary factor for continuing learning.

In the professions, two practitioners explained the synergy of working part-time in a fieldwork setting and in a university. In one case, this involved two separate part-time jobs, in another, a secondment. In both cases, practitioners were also studying for research degrees. Both participants described the benefits of drawing from the workplace as a source of inquiry, interpreting ideas through their research and applying their learning as teaching in higher education, and as applied practice in the workplace.

Synergies were reported in the data as recommendations for building relationships between contexts. First, as a means of fostering synergies between work and study, participants indicated that interpersonal support from others, as work colleagues, other students and tutors was the most significant factor. In the interviews, this aspect was noted as a key characteristic of continuing learning in the workplace, where it was described as

interpersonal communication, as a key factor of altruistic motivation to support others in learning. The significance of this factor across all data sets led to a consideration that interpersonal support contributed to a necessary factor of reciprocity, where this was seen as a means of sharing learning in the workplace through mutual exchange and dialogue. Collaborative learning communities extended this notion to a wider constituency of practitioners. There were indications in all professions that learning communities, conferences and networks created synergies between work and study. Ideas of leadership for learning and interpersonal support groups were connected, in that learning communities required facilitation, not necessarily by a manager, but by an organisation- or profession-based leader who could engender opportunities for interpersonal dialogue, reciprocity, trust and support in ongoing learning. As a finding, this proposal was drawn from practice examples of teaching and learning communities in education; peer supervision in nursing and learning networks in social work.

Congruence between academic study and work was noted as a key factor that helped bridge the two contexts in both sets of data, where a synergistic relationship represented 'more than the sum of its parts'. This was most apparent in examples of applied action research, described in community education and nursing. More collaborative research between university and communities was proposed as an opportunity to share practices for the benefit of local areas and organisations.

A need to plan integrated continuing learning schemes of benefit to profession, academy and workplace was suggested, where RPL processes could support the application of material learning outputs to more than one context. In the data that referred to evidencing professional competencies, there was frequent reference to portfolios of practice evidence across all professions. With the addition of critical analysis, potential for strengthening synergies between profession and academy by linking experiential learning to academic assessment through the example of RPL was proposed.

Next, trends in continuing professional learning are discussed.

## 9.4 Trends

In the introduction to the study, two general interests were posed, about what it means to be a twenty-first century professional and in what ways continuing professional learning could address the ever-changing landscape of professional practice. These interests were drawn together in Cervero's (2000) queries about the practices and goals of ongoing learning and Freire's (1970) idea that critical analysis of all educational processes was necessary to determine socially constructed positions of power.

To address the research question of 'what historical and contemporary trends contribute to understanding the concepts of professions, professionalism and continuing professional learning?' this section discusses trends identified both in literature and in data findings.

Socio-political challenges in relation to the topic stemming from neoliberalist political UK influences introduced discussion of processes of managerialism, standardisation and marketisation to public services (Evetts, 2003; 2011). These approaches, coupled with use of advanced technologies, have impacted on continuing learning requirements for contemporary professional practitioners in three ways: first, performativity of standardised practice outcomes and regulatory frameworks designed to meet requirements of professional accountability and risk assessment (Fenwick and Nerland, 2014; Reich, Rooney and Boud, 2015) and second, an increased demand for higher academic qualifications for entry and career advancement within professions. Where increased qualifications become a requirement of progression in the workplace, this could contribute to a rising credentialism as a divisive influence in society (Bills and Brown, 2011). In this argument, an influx of people with higher credentials to a market where there are insufficient job opportunities can create societal dissatisfaction (Dore, 1976). In terms of continuing learning, the same concern applied, with additional difficulties where learned workplace experience could be overtaken by academic certification, although limited experience, in attaining promoted posts.

Prioritising the credential rather than recognising the importance of a balance between theory and experience reflected Bourdieu's (1977) argument that the credential represented a passport to higher economic and social status. This focus meant that projects of wider access to university education would be overtaken where raising the qualification bar for entry to, or promotion within, professions.



A third influence which related both to professional accountability and academic study for work was an expanding individualisation of learning (Edwards, 2002; Billett, 2010), through academic study, self-evaluation processes and individualised technologies. Where trust in professions had diminished (Schön, 1983; O'Neill, 2002), concerns were that this had stemmed from a suppression of professional expertise towards wellbeing, equality and social justice by reductionist efficiency-driven accountability measures.

In the empirical study, three trends in learning focused first on academic study with outcomes of both transferable personal capabilities, and higher qualifications for career progression and job security. In the latter respect, market competition continued to drive up the bar for qualifications in professions, and for positions of responsibility, at the expense of experience. Second, monitoring and evaluation of practice was apparent as an increasing requirement of professional development, perceived less as a means of learning, and more as a process of accountability for registration requirements. This linked to the processes of performativity and competency measurement discussed in Chapter 3, section 4. For professional learning, this represented a focus on completion of fractionalised competencies, as opposed to the achievement of the holistic competence (Leont'ev, 1978; Smith, 2005; Barnett, 1994) required to respond to Schön's (1987:3) complex problems of 'greatest human concern'. Third, in formal or informal learning through work, a reduction in situated shared learning opportunities was apparent in the study and this has implications for the ways in which ethical norms are formed through interpersonal communication. The examples of coaching and mentoring, of observing and modelling behaviour on that of experienced practitioners was evident, and particularly in nursing, the concept of learning in an active, ongoing community of practice (Wenger, 1998) was apparent. The latter learning approaches linked to the 'apprenticeship' model identified in historical trends.

In contemporary learning situations, two trends were apparent, first, following the transfer of qualifying accreditation from professions to academies, post-qualifying learning had followed suit, where accredited advanced degrees are gaining more significance than unaccredited professional knowledge update. In the research, budgetary constraints were indicated as contributing to a reduction in face-to-face courses or networking in professional learning, both in relation to accredited or non-accredited learning. The transfer of responsibility from

the workplace organisation to the individual practitioner to organise, implement and evidence individual completion of thirty-five hours of CPD per annum might represent a short-term financial saving for the profession, but with potentially a greater long-term cost to society.

As wider contemporary trends, where globalisation and intelligent technologies continue to increase, the ways knowledge is created and shared create greater threats to professionals and professionals. Advanced technologies presently used to perform routine technical tasks in the professional workplace are being developed to carry out more complex functions, for example through telepresence and tele-robotics. Where these have benefits of increasing access to education, health and well-being, there are also concerns about a future where professionals are no longer required, and replaced by technological administrators who oversee computerised delivery of services to society at lower costs. The film 'I, Daniel Blake', directed by Ken Loach (2016), gave a striking example of ways in which disadvantages in society were exacerbated by reliance on computer technologies, without sufficient professional intervention or human ethical judgement. For professional learning, this concern is represented by tensions between efficiency and effectiveness. In public service professions, efficiency is taken to mean 'best value', where a high quality of services provided on behalf of society, within competitive pricing markets (Evetts, 2013). This has led to a situation where some services designed to meet disadvantage in societies are run as commercial enterprises for private gain. To achieve effectiveness, professional learning is prioritised in competency frameworks and academic accreditation, rather than as recognition and promotion of participative ethical practice.

A trend of increased academic study as continuing learning might contribute to problems of credentialism. Recognising positive aspects of increased access to higher education in literature and data, the contribution of academic study to ongoing professional learning was tempered by caveats of societal division through educational privilege (Weber, 1922; Bourdieu, 1977; Bills and Brown, 2011). In this construct, positions of occupational power valued academic accreditation before experiential knowledge and skills (Dore, 1976; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Boud & Solomon, 2001).

In the study it was noted that credential inflation has developed where required entry levels of qualifications increased across occupations. As inflation expanded within professions, qualified practitioners exceeded available posts. To achieve promoted posts, practitioners then required additional qualifications (Brown et al., 1997; Collins, 1994; Torstendhal, 1990). Credentialism was apparent in the first set of data, which was representative of experienced mid-career professionals studying for a first degree, where the academic credential was necessary to 'future-proof' their careers for job retention or progression. In the second data, the outcomes of credentialism were most apparent in education, where the Chartered Teacher workforce development scheme had resulted in more practitioners with advanced degrees than available promoted posts. Across professions, a hidden cost of credentialism was apparent where advanced study funded by employers led to a career move in a different setting. It was noted that teaching in professional disciplines in higher education had moved to doctoral level, whereas previously, practice expertise had been accorded higher value. This aspect represented credentialist closure (Brown et al., 1997) where the responsibility of teaching students for the profession through universities becomes restricted to a limited number of practitioners with higher academic credentials, as opposed to drawing on experienced practitioners across the profession. Particularly in Scottish professions where the degree-entry is relatively recent, this reduces potential lecturing staff to small numbers of candidates. As a concern of credentialism, which relates to the tensions of power and control between universities and professions in ongoing professional learning, down playing experiential teaching has implications for future students and practitioners. In Aristotle's analysis, neither theory nor practice alone was sufficient in teaching others; instead, a combination of both was necessary for the development of mastery and practical wisdom (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

In the data, respondents indicated that personal responsibilities for learning were increasing, characterised first as individual acquisition of knowledge and skills in relation to academic study and second as regulatory professional accountability. Structured forms of interpersonal learning were indicated as decreasing in workplace settings. Increased individualised learning was apparent in all four professions, described as a characteristic of both professional accountability and of academic study.

To illustrate implications and challenges of individualism, Figure 19 shows individualism in relation to two main influences of knowledge acquisition in relation to academic study and practice accountability of the profession, and potential challenge to collaborative work and the formation of ethical norms. In each case, technological mediation is indicated as a contributory factor of influence.

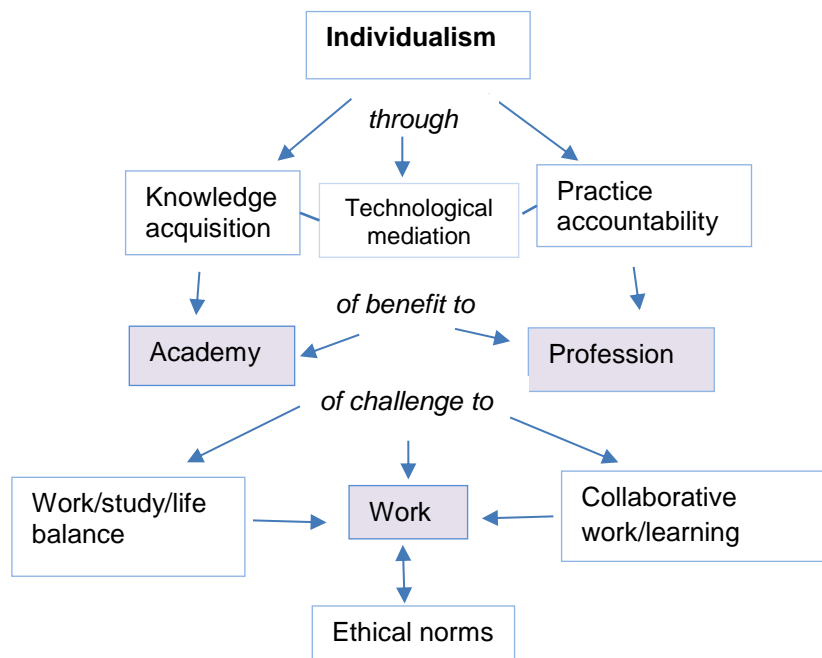


Figure 19 Implications of individualism for learning contexts

In the diagram, it is suggested that individualism in continuing learning is developed through mediating constructs of practice accountability, of benefit to professional agencies, and accredited knowledge acquisition, indicated here as of benefit to universities. In this context, benefit to universities is perceived as economic through their increased provision of learning, and in the authority of accredited knowledge over practice experience. The challenges indicated in the diagram are that individualised learning impacts on collaborative work, and on a work, study life balance. The implications are that imbalance within these elements would have a detrimental effect on both the effectiveness of work, and on formation and enactment of ethical practice.

In the figure, it is suggested that individualism in learning has been influenced by the increased use of communicative technologies, both in relation to practice audit and academic study. While this is not a central inquiry theme, it is an area that warrants closer examination in connection with normative relationships and roles in professions, and the ways in which specialist skills are learned, shared or developed. In specialist areas of work, a developmental process of acquiring, assimilating and critically analysing situated, dialogical experience was noted as necessary in learning to be professional (Bateson, 1972; Aristotle; Grundy & Robinson, 2004). Exponential growth in eLearning opportunities has economic and political interests which may have unintended consequences as well as benefits. Bateson's (1972) caveat about technological media indicated that because ideas are more widely distributed, does not necessarily make them either useful or true, a factor of particularly relevance in a so-called 'post-truth' era. Managerial power and control of the structures of technologies and manipulation of inputs and outputs has been indicated as a problem of performativity, where technological processes are used to control the activities and decisions of professional practitioners, and as a result, insufficient attention is paid to the ethical responsibilities of practice (Lyotard, 1984; Ball, 2013).

Further concerns about technological communication included the combination of fragmentation of practice and wider accessibility to professional knowledge and skills. The more professional work becomes reduced to basic tasks, the more accessible such simplified activities would be become through technological distribution (Susskind & Susskind, 2015: 142). A result of this process, these authors asserted, would be that specialist knowledge and skills could be more easily acquired and applied by non-professionals, and potentially applied for profit rather than with altruistic interests in societal good. The outcome of such a trend, the authors warned, would be the demise of professions as specialist occupations. In these concerns, the implications of technological impacts on the development of experiential expertise and ethical *phronēsis* require further research.

As an outcome of increased individualism, enhanced use of individual communicative technologies and a decrease in collective opportunities for workplace learning indicated a decline in interpersonal interaction that was considered by participants in the study to be at

the core of learning how to be an effective professional. In the literature, Aristotle's concept of *phronēsis* as wise practice was dependent not only on knowledge acquisition, but on the development of experiential deliberative judgement for the benefit of society (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Similarly, in Durkheim's (1958) perspective of how ethics are formed in professions, collective interaction was proposed as a necessary condition of ethical practice. Cottone's (2001) idea of ethical judgement was based on the premise that ethical decisions are situationally structured through integrated processes of determination of need, dialogue with more experienced others and negotiation with participants. In Vygotsky's (1978) construct of socially constructed learning, what is first learned interpersonally between people is then processed intrapersonally by the individual. In this respect, collective interaction determines ethical knowledge through debate and dialogue. This idea was shown in Figure 18, as necessary factors of transformative ethical learning. To extend this argument, reciprocity as an opportunity to expand collaborative learning approaches and as a balance to individualism, is considered next.

In fostering reciprocity across learning contexts, there is potential for shared learning through collaboration in relation to mediating artefacts (Vygotsky, 1978) and planned impact (Porritt, 2014). Vygotsky's (1978) proposal was that learning is socially constructed and mediated through artefacts devised in socio-cultural circumstances. In the empirical data for the study, examples of mediation across the four professions referred to artefacts produced in relation to outcomes of study (academy); of competency evaluation (profession) and reporting (work). Organisational reciprocity as collaboration between the three learning contexts in the integration of mediating artefacts and processes could contribute to a more connected approach to continuing learning. In addition, the findings from data indicated a need for more interactive and communicative means of mediation where professionals have opportunities to meet, to talk, to problematise practice and share solutions. Integrated research between universities and workplaces, concurrent part-time posts in two locations, secondments and sabbatical periods of study were suggested in the findings of the study as means of crossing from one setting to another. While such initiatives are routinely set in place in professions and universities, what was not apparent in this data was Porritt's (2014) idea of planned outcomes of such initiatives.

In the next section, necessary factors for continuing professional learning are considered.

### 9.5 Necessary factors

This section responds to the research question ‘what necessary factors can be determined for continuing professional learning as a means of enhancing common good in societies?’

From the findings, two sets of contradictions were proposed as key tensions in trends of contemporary continuing professional learning. These were between individualism and reciprocity, and between accountability and altruism. Three necessary factors of dialogical critical thinking, reciprocity and adaptability were then proposed as a means of addressing such tensions, and fostering ethical processes of continuing learning in professions for public good.

First, analytical critical thinking was described in the data as a particular characteristic of learning which facilitated identification of contradictions, surfacing or assumptions and influences. As a factor of continuing learning, this allowed the learner to progress from stages of habitual to transformative practice. In the data, this was described as ‘having an inquiring mind’ (G/110), and as applying ‘double-loop learning’ (Argyris and Schön, 1974). From consideration of a socially constructed nature of learning, it was proposed that individual reflection as critical thinking was insufficient as a holistic process of learning, and that stage of dialogue with other as interpersonal critical analysis of action necessarily preceded intrapersonal reflection as individual thought (Vygotsky, 1978). Individual reflection allowed internalised accommodation or assimilation of ideas (Piaget, 1978) which led to a stage of deliberation, either individual or collective, as reflection for action (Schön, 1987). An awareness of socio-cultural influences on practice, and of tensions and challenges to ethical practice contributed to Aristotle’s idea of deliberation towards *phronēsis* (Flyvbjerg, 2001). If practical wisdom in professions, considered to be the highest attainment of learning (Aristotle; Dreyfus, 2001) is the aim of continuing learning, then critical thinking, as not only an individual but in a dialogical analysis of work becomes a necessary factor in the process.

This process was illustrated previously in Figure 18, described as ‘necessary factors of transformative ethical learning’.

Second, the idea of reciprocity is suggested as a factor that has particular relevance to twenty-first century concerns about fragmented individualisation in professional practices.

Reciprocity is proposed as a necessary factor of learning which is participative, associative, and which offered a means of fostering ethical practice in professions. As a factor of ethical learning and professionalism, reciprocity related to Adam Smith's (1759) concept of 'mutual sympathy', as a commitment of exchange and support to the other, which was proposed as a balance to an emphasis on individualised productivity, stemming from division of labour. In Adam Smith's ideas, both individual interest as individualism and commitment to the other as reciprocity were proposed as factors of a balanced and prosperous society. As interpersonal reciprocity, characteristics of mutual exchange and support between peers and colleagues were apparent in the empirical data in processes of interpersonal communication; teaching others, informal sharing and networked learning communities. In learning contexts, the importance of organisational reciprocity that crossed boundaries in between profession, academy and workplace was emphasised, as a means of enhancing holistic learning which contributed to first-order work of human engagement (Lyotard, 1984).

A third necessary factor is described as adaptability. Whereas this factor did not feature specifically in the selective categories, nor was it a key focus of discussion in the literature review, it is used here as representation of transformative learning, as a continual reshaping and improving the world. In the rationale for the study, both Schön (1971) and Bauman (2008) stressed the importance of continuing learning as a means of enhancing adaptability and ensuring democratic citizenship in a fast-changing world. Bateson's (1972:511) Zen quotation that 'to become accustomed to anything is a terrible thing' represented change as a forward-moving, positive, ecological inevitability. Transformative change here means not being content with routinised, habitual practice, or conditions of compliant performativity, but being open to learning approaches that lead to enhanced awareness and understanding of the purposes and processes of ethical professional practice in societies. In the data, a key outcome of academic study was the enhancement of personal capabilities. Again, where the term 'adaptability' was not used in, for example, list of attributes provided by QAA Scotland (2011) it represents an important feature of learning that ensures continuity in the workplace for Bowden et al.'s (2000) proposal that attributes developed through academic study extend



beyond technical knowledge or discipline-specific skills, and instead contribute to qualities which prepare graduates, in this case continuing professional learners 'as agents of social good in an unknown future' (Bowden et al., cited in Barrie, 2004:262). Finally, adaptability featured in the study as a core concept of socially constructed learning. Without adaptability in relation to questioning and transforming mediation processes of learning in an information age, or adaptability in negotiating different contexts for learning, a threat is that passive compliance might result, rather than active participation in the social construction of stronger ethical practice in a 'post-truth' world, for the benefit of common good.

This section concludes with reference to the quotation from Strauss (1993), which prefaced the study. Strauss co-founded the social constructivist grounded theory approach which has informed this study. In this quotation, Strauss (1993:19) reflects on the fluidity of progress, where contradictions of fragmentation and re-emergence continually ebb and flow. Where 'nothing is strictly determined', he argued that the essential role of human participation is making and remaking the structures that shape societal life. In this endeavor, an altruistic rather than economic focus is required to reinvigorate reciprocity in learning. To achieve connected and transformative continuing professional learning for the benefit not only of individuals but of societies, the key proposals of this study are that dialogical critical thinking, reciprocity and adaptability are necessary factors in this process.

## 9.6 Conclusion

This study has examined what is meant by the idea of continuing professional learning and the significance of this concept to 21<sup>st</sup> century professionals. From an initial investigation of historical perspectives of professions in society, a review of literature considered mediated, socially contextualized, developmental and ethical theories of learning, of relevance to professionals and the contributions they make to society. The study aimed to investigate a series of purposes, processes and parameters of continuing professional learning for societal good. Using these aims as a framework, substantive findings from empirical research were reported in Chapter 8, and were discussed in relation to literature in Chapter 9. These findings were generated using a grounded theory research approach, drawing from categories produced from undergraduate documents in Chapter 6, and from factors reported

by interview respondents in four professions in Chapter 7. Formal theoretical constructs were presented in Figure 18 and 19, in sections 9.2 and 9.4 respectively. Figure 18 illustrated the necessary inclusion of dialogue prior to individual reflection, in a deliberative cycle of learning for transformative action. A second conceptual relationship between individualised academic knowledge acquisition and professional accountability, and in terms of the impact these processes may have on work and the formation of ethical norms, was presented in Figure 19

To draw together key arguments from the research, trends and necessary factors for effective and ethical continuing learning were identified in sections 9.4 and 9.5 of this chapter. In this section, the key findings of the research are summarised in response to the research questions which concern contexts and characteristics, motivations and outcomes, and boundaries and synergies of continuing learning. The study concludes with an overview of the implications of trends, challenges and opportunities concerning ways in which continuing learning can benefit societies.

#### 9.6.1 Contexts and characteristics of learning

The study identified three main continuing professional learning contexts as the academy, the profession and the workplace. Characteristics of continuing learning were reported as acquisition of specialist knowledge and transferable skills through academic study; as self-directed CPD and evidence-based practice evaluation for the profession, and as critical reflection, interpersonal communication and applied learning for change in the workplace.

#### 9.6.2 Motivation and outcomes

Motivation for academic study was mainly identified as extrinsic, led by employer funding or salary incentive schemes. A second form of extrinsic motivation was the requirement of professional accountability for registration. Intrinsic motivation was apparent in specific examples of self-funded study; in patterns of learner achievement followed by further study, and where learning was undertaken by participants for purposes of self-actualisation and enjoyment. Altruistic motivation was apparent as participative action research, where this approach underpinned applied academic study.

Key outcomes of academic study were reported across the data as enhanced personal capabilities; as additional academic qualifications and increased professional capacity. Career progression, mainly to new settings, was a key outcome of academic study for most interviewees in the research; in documentary analysis, the main outcome of study was reported as enhanced personal capabilities, followed by gaining additional qualifications to future-proof careers in an insecure jobs market.

### 9.6.3 Boundaries and synergies

A key boundary between profession and work concerned a lack of connection between professional competency requirements, including self-directed CPD, and tacit learning in the workplace, where the latter was described as shared learning through modelling, co-working or dialogue and debate about complex professional dilemmas. In a second boundary between profession and academy, learning instruments assessed and accredited by either profession or academy were reported as incompatible. A third boundary was indicated between work and academy, where recognition of prior learning was underreported, and a fourth boundary issue suggested that increase in continuing learning in different formats contributed to an imbalance between work, study and personal or family life.

Synergies between contexts were reported both as practitioner experience and as recommendations. The most significant factor for bridging contexts was interpersonal support from others, as work colleagues, peers and tutors. The importance of this factor across all data sets led to a consideration that interpersonal support contributed to a necessary factor of reciprocity, where this was seen as a means of sharing learning in the workplace through mutual exchange and dialogue. As a key finding, this factor was described in the data as interpersonal support groups, peer supervision, learning communities, conferences and networks. A second key synergy was noted as adaptability, derived from transferable processes of critical thinking, reflection and inquiry. Outcomes of enhanced individual capacity noted as insight, confidence and resilience, enabled practitioners to make transitions between contexts of work and learning. As synergies between work and academy, research approaches that fostered applied participatory action research and collaborative research were suggested. Collaborative RPL accreditation

between contexts and forward planning of integrated continuing learning schemes were further recommendations.

Overall, the findings from data indicated a need for more reciprocal means of learning mediation both within and between contexts. Leadership for learning, learning communities and networks were proposed as approaches which would enhance interpersonal reciprocity. Expansion of integrated research between universities and workplaces, concurrent part-time posts across contexts, secondments and sabbatical periods of study were suggested as organisational reciprocity, as a means of creating better relationships between contexts.

#### 9.6.4 Implications: key trends, challenges and opportunities

The study recognised that trends of increased academic study in professions contribute to a more skilled, knowledgeable and educated workforce, with added benefits of practitioners with enhanced personal capabilities of insight and critical thinking. Increased professional accountability was indicated as ensuring professional competence, responsible reliability and public safety, and workplace learning, identified as reflection, modelling, dialogue and collective action, demonstrated an ongoing interpretation and advancement of practice.

As a key challenge, trends of increased individualised professional learning were apparent in empirical descriptions of the professional and academic contexts of learning. A consequent reduction in shared workplace learning opportunities apparent in the data has implications for the ways in which ethical practice is formed through collaborative dialogue as normative professionalism.

A challenge of professional learning as reductionist accountability was that where work practices are increasingly systematised through technologies, this could contribute to a diminished formation of ethical norms and exercise of professional agency. A second caveat was that reductionism presents increased potential for technological processes to replace the need for the human intervention and consequently, professional judgement. A predicted reduction in the need for, and even demise of, professions in society (Susskind and Susskind, 2015) raises a question about how, and by whom, ethical judgements would be made about health, education, safety, inclusion and social justice.

In terms of opportunities, across all aspects of learning, exponential growth in opportunities to access, share and create knowledge continues to expand, responding to demands for keeping up-to-date with new policies, theories and practices. From the findings of the study, learning contexts and processes which have existed since medieval times in universities, professions and workplaces continue to foster professional learning for societal good. Academies as centres for intellectual expertise foster the highest forms of knowledge, inquiry and debate; in workplace communities of practice, experienced practitioners support novices in pathways to expertise, artistry and mastery. In professions, ethical principles and levels of expertise and excellence continue to be promoted. The problem for professions seems to be increased demand for specialised learning processes and lack of integration between contexts. Where boundaries between the three contexts of learning were identified in relation to Engeström's (2001) constructs of activity systems, it was suggested that the prospect of crossing boundaries could be addressed by processes of critical analysis, in surfacing of contradictions of power and control (Bateson, 1972; Freire, 1970) which act to inhibit growth within and between systems. In the study, individual and organisational adaptability, reciprocity and dialogical critical thinking were proposed as necessary processes for this purpose.

In conclusion, the study has argued that continuing learning is a developmental and socially constructed and contexted process involving acquisition of knowledge and skills, critical interpretative inquiry and deliberative transformative change. As a core construct of professional learning, the process of achieving Aristotle's concept of *phronēsis*, or wise practice for public good, is being eroded by challenges of individualism and accountability. To address this threat, the challenge for twenty-first century continuing professional learning is to maximise processes of adaptability, dialogical critical thinking and reciprocity within and between learning contexts. In this way, effective, ethical practice can be learned and co-created as shared experience, across boundaries of work, academy and profession, for the benefit of the societies in which we live, work and learn.

## Chapter 10 Reflective account

This final chapter gives a reflective and reflexive account of the study, focusing first on the achievements and second on limitations of the research, with a particular focus on the use of constructivist grounded theory. A reflexive account, as suggested by Hertz, is taken to mean not only what has been discovered in the study, but what influenced the selections, interpretations and reports of that discovery.

Reflexive research does not simply report facts or truth, but actively constructs Interpretations of his or her experiences in the field and then questions how those interpretations came about. (Hertz, 1997: viii)

### 10.1 Achievements of the research

First, at the point where I began the study, the topic of continuing learning was particularly relevant to my practice as leader of a Professional Development undergraduate programme, to the professionals who studied this programme as work based students and to colleagues in the professions of education, social work and nursing who were increasingly undertaking academic study as continuing learning.

Added to this was a growing expectation in Scottish professions of continuing professional learning as ongoing evidence-based self-evaluation, which seemed to add to the requirements of already overburdened practitioners. This meant that ongoing learning had contexts of academic study, professional accountability and informal learning through and for work. To focus the study, a concept of crossing boundaries between the three learning contexts of work, academy and profession was selected, to examine any divisions or ways of combining learning approaches, potentially reducing the range of learning requirements and taking a more holistic view of learning as 'more than the sum of its parts'. In addition to examining the processes and parameters of learning, it seemed relevant to consider what continuing learning contributes to being professional in 21<sup>st</sup> century Scotland.

In this respect, the research aimed to determine in what ways continuing learning in professions was of benefit to society, in an interest described as 'necessary factors for common good'. In determining achievements, the question is to what extent has the study contributed to better understanding of continuing learning for my practice, for colleagues and research respondents, for the four professions, or policy makers and providers of learning?

For my own part, as a result of several years of reading, thinking and writing about the topic, I have achieved personal goals of an increased awareness and understanding of a range of philosophical, educational, sociological and research approaches in literature. Organising and analysing the empirical research, although ultimately rewarding, was a more challenging process and the limitations of this are discussed in the next section. Where the outcomes of the study are not yet measurable, in that it is unknown whether or not future readers might access, benefit from, or progress some aspects of the inquiry, this study has contributed to a on 'The Ethical Graduate' in a forthcoming publication on graduate attributes. The selection and interpretation of literature will hopefully contribute to wider debates about the challenges as well as benefits of academic accreditation, of managerialism, or competence-led performativity. The presentation, analysis and findings of empirical data might reinforce or contradict practitioners' or providers' ideas about professional learning, offer ideas for further development and debate, or be disputed in terms of relevance or validity. In any event, if the study can contribute to broadening professional dialogue, debate and deliberation about continuing learning, encourage critical analysis of its purposes, processes and parameters, and debate ways in which professional learning might contribute to addressing the challenges of contemporary societies through collaboration and co-operation in advancing knowledge, skills, creativity and innovation, then it will have achieved its goal.

## 10.2 Limitations of the research

The main limitations of the study were the breadth of the topic, and the selection of a grounded theory approach after the submission of a research proposal and general literature review as first requirements of the study. In the latter approach, literature had preceded research design for the study, whereas in grounded theory, literature is more often located at the end of the study. This challenge was addressed by adopting Thornberg's (2012) idea of

informed grounded theory, explained in section 5.3.2. Social constructivist theories (Vygotsky, 1978) of learning informed a grounded theory approach as the basis of research methods.

A key limitation of grounded theory, according to Corbin and Strauss (2015: 218), was that 'the design cannot be established ahead of time', as concepts are developed in the process of the research and analysis. In progressing the principles of theoretical sampling, the sample and questions develop as categories emerge, which then leads the researcher 'to go to the person and places that will maximize the opportunity to develop categories to their fullest extent in terms of properties and dimensions' (Corbin & Strauss, 2015: 218). This process meant that the sample of participants changed as the research progressed, to include a purposive selection of specific respondents who could add to emerging categories. For example, the introduction of profession as a third learning context (in addition to work and academy) led to the inclusion of further interviews with respondents in four professions. This also meant that as categories emerged and changes made to the sample of interviewees, three original, transcribed interviews were not used. In order to have an equal number of respondents in each professional group, a further transcribed interview was omitted. This alteration, while time consuming, was not necessarily a limitation, as the additional data made a valuable contribution to the selection of research questions and informed analysis in the study. There were limitations to contributions of the documentary analysis to the study, in that i) the data was produced by practitioners from a wider range of professional contexts than the four professions of interviewees; ii) of two groups of documents, the first group was mainly concerned with motivation for study. Again, the data provided valuable perspectives about the motivation, characteristics and outcomes of continuing professional learning for practitioners for study and this contributed to triangulation of perspectives in the overall findings for the study.

In reporting interview data, it was a particular challenge to retain participant anonymity and at the same time to ensure that individual voices were surfaced. In the first instance, alphabetical initials were used as indicators. Assumed names were later added to the data, and where this gave the respondents character, it was recognised that using assumed names could attach a sense of identity that might influence reading or interpretation of data.



To limit this as researcher, I chose names that had no personal associations as names of colleagues, friends or family. Naming respondents also highlighted a cultural focus on interview respondents, who were mainly female and Scottish and all were white, of mid-career age. Whereas the analysis of documents represented a wider spectrum of ethnicities, ages and genders, cultural diversity is recognised as a limitation in the research.

Limitations of grounded theory were different interpretations of the process of data analysis, supported by different authors. To address this difference, Strauss and Corbin's (1998) open, axial and selective codes were applied and selective categories identified in the first data were developed and added to in the second data. Categories which related to specific circumstances were reported and compared with other data as part of the developmental process of constructing theory. This allowed the research to follow Charmaz's (2014) proposal of a constructivist grounded theory approach as more flexible and adaptable, as opposed to the more positivistic approach to grounded theory, originally devised by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and further developed by Glaser (1978). To follow a constructivist approach more closely aligned to Charmaz's format, it would have been appropriate to have first conducted the research, analysed and extended data, as in Bateson's (1972) Levels I and II, then discussed findings and contradictions in relation to literature as a Level III, transformative process. The initial literature review for this study involved a wide range of authors and ideas, as suggested by the professional doctorate as a starting point for study, but it was then difficult to relate all of these discussions and debates to the categories and findings from the data. It is hoped that the links from data to literature are sufficient to show processes of abductive thinking in a predominantly inductive socially constructed research approach. In conclusion, the process of undertaking a study of this breadth and depth has been a challenging, yet rewarding experience. Having retired from work since beginning the study, I am not in a position to apply the findings of the study to my own practice, or to investigate some of these ideas in further research. Instead, my hope is that this study will contribute to ongoing debates about reciprocity, critical analytical dialogue and adaptability in transformative continuing professional learning, and in particular, debate about the learning processes and enactment of an ethical role of professionals for common good in societies.

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## Appendix 1 Research Proposal

**Kate Martin, DEd Professional Doctorate Programme, ESWCE**

**Supervisor: Professor Yolande Muschamp**

**Research Proposal for University of Dundee Ethics Approval**

**Project Title: Crossing boundaries between work and learning in higher education accredited continuing professional development**

### **Background Information**

Rationale: in a time of economic recession, academic credentials are generally considered to be an advantage in a competitive jobs market. While learning is recognised to offer benefits in developing workforce knowledge and skills, any perceived boundaries between work and learning may increase divisions within the workplace or between the academy and the workplace, with potential implications for deepening divisions in society. The aim of this study is to explore with practitioner graduates, ways in which workplace based academic study addresses differences and crosses boundaries in order to strengthen connections between work and learning.

The study stems from a literature review entitled *Credentialism, Professionalism and Professional Learning* submitted in 2012 as part of the DEd professional doctorate. Drawing from literatures of professional and organisational learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Eraut, 1994; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Bateson, 1972; Argyris and Schön, 1974, 1996; Engeström, 1987; 2009), the study aims to explore ways in which perceived boundaries between work and learning present opportunities for expansion. Lamont and Molnar's (2002) consideration of symbolic and social boundaries, and symbolic societal inequalities represented in Bourdieu's (1986) ideas of capital will inform concepts of the study.

Vygotsky's (1981) assertions that higher order learning is socially constructed and takes place first through social interaction and then individual internalization, mediated by cultural tools and signs (Wertsch, 1991) will underpin investigation of literature for the study. Bateson's (1972) levels of learning and Engeström's (1987, 2009) activity and expansive theories will contribute to the formation of a theoretical model for analysis of connections between academic and professional workplace contexts and ways in which collaborative learning may expand workplace knowledge, artistry and phronēsis. Analysis of activity systems of the workplace and the academy as interacting activity systems will be informed by Engeström's (2009) third generation cultural historical activity and expansive theory, outlined in Figure 1.

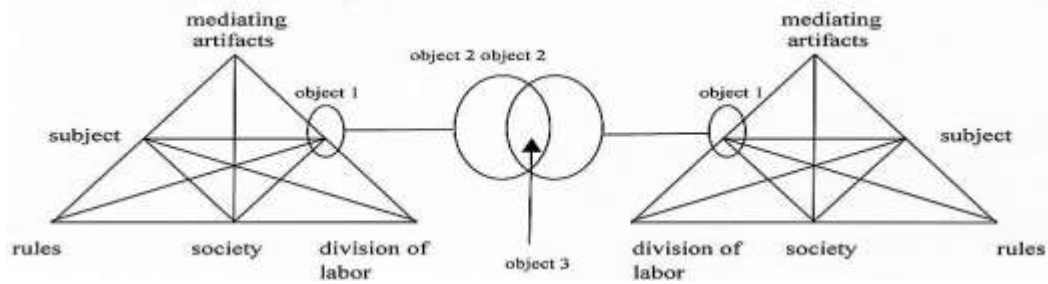


Figure 1: Third Generation Interacting Activity Systems (Engeström, 2009).

### **Aims and objectives of the study**

Through exploration of personal professional learning narratives and documentary analysis of related professional continuing professional development policies and associated analytical studies the inquiry seeks to understand ways in which work-based academic learning can contribute to increasing individual and collective workplace capacities and to determine any factors which may enhance this process.

### **Brief description of participants and recruitment methods**

The sample focuses on professional practitioners who are past graduates of the University of Dundee and who have completed accredited academic study as continuing professional development. Participants for interview will be selected from past graduates of workplace based undergraduate and postgraduate professional development programmes across a range of qualifications, locations and professions. Purposive sampling across a range of contexts will enable emergence of any common and/or distinctive themes. Participants will receive full information about the purpose, structure and dissemination of the study. Ethical procedures surrounding choice about whether or not to participate in interviews are detailed in item 6 below and in Appendices 2 & 3.

### **Brief description of research methods including details of how data will be securely stored.**

**Documentary analysis:** a random sample of archived written accounts, drawn from 20 past graduates of ESWCE professional development programmes will be selected for scrutiny and content analysis. Extracts from two types of documents will be sampled: i) application forms and ii) final professional projects. From application forms, the 'learner statement' detailing learner motivation, reasons and goals for study will be extracted, anonymised and analysed. From professional projects, a sample of concluding 'reflective accounts' which offers learner reflections on workplace and learning relationships in achieving an accredited qualification will be anonymised and analysed. From analysis of these narrative statements, coded responses will be drawn up around motivations, learner change, learning processes, learner and workplace impact. Data will take the form of coded and anonymised notes. No names or personal details will be retained in connection with this data.

**Interviews:** ten narrative interviews will be conducted with professional practitioners who have completed accredited academic study as continuing professional development. Interviews will draw from the experiences of participants and their motivations towards and interpretations of work and accredited learning. Interviews seek to determine themes which integrate learning approaches for workforce and academic development. An initial analysis of responses will take place, followed by second interviews with the same respondents in order to deepen the inquiry. The data will be stored in a secure password protected file on the researcher's University server. Permissions documents and hard copies of completed questionnaires and interview transcriptions will be stored in a locked filing cabinet accessible only by the researcher. The data will be kept for a maximum of two years after which time it will be securely destroyed by deletion of audio files and shredding of notes, permissions forms and transcriptions. The data will be kept for a maximum of two years after which time it will be securely destroyed by deletion of audio files and shredding questionnaires, permissions forms and transcriptions.

**Arrangements for participant information, consent and debriefing.**

**Documentary analysis:** a request will be made in writing to the Dean of School of Education, Social Work and Community Education for permission to scrutinise and analyse a series of 20 archived application forms and professional project reflective accounts, from a sample of 20 past graduates of ESWCE professional development programmes.

**Interviews:** an initial request will be made in writing to three ESWCE Professional Programme directors for permission to contact a small sample of past graduates. Guidance about email contact for a sample of past graduates from each programme will be sought from programme directors. Following an initial informal request by email (Appendix 1) to potential participants to ask if they would be interested in participating in the study, information about the study and processes of participation (Appendix 2) will be emailed to respondents who indicate interest for their further consideration. Those who agree to participate in the study will be asked to return a copy of the participant informed consent form (Appendix 3). Participants will be free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to answer specific questions during interview sessions. A debriefing session will take place after each interview. A summary of key points from the first interview and a model for consideration at the second interview will be provided to participants before the second interview takes place.

**Estimated start date and duration:** The project will begin on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013. It is anticipated that data collection phase will take three months, between June and August 2014. Data analysis will take place during August – September 2014, with a view to preparation of the final report by December 2014.

## Research Proposal Appendices

1. Initial email invitation
2. Participant information
3. Participant consent form
4. Interview questions
5. Ethics Committee Emails

### **Research Proposal Appendix 1: Informal email request**

Dear.....

*I am aiming to interview a number of professional development graduates for my professional doctorate study on links between work and learning. Would you be interested in participating in two individual interviews for this? If so, I could send you further information about the study. Your participation would be confidential and voluntary.*

### **Research Proposal Appendix 2: Participant information Sheet**

**Project title: Crossing boundaries between work and learning in higher education accredited continuing professional development.**

**Purpose of study: Professional Doctorate in Education**

**Researcher: Kate Martin**

You are being invited to participate in this study as a workplace based past graduate of a professional development programme. The study involves investigation into links between work and learning and is being carried out as part of a Professional Doctorate study undertaken by the researcher. The study aims to investigate any boundaries between work and learning in the achievement of higher education credentials, and to explore means of improving linkage between workforce development and academic study. The study will be presented as part of the award of Professional Doctorate in Education at the University of Dundee. With your permission, anonymous extracts from the study and from your interview may be used in conference papers and academic publications.

Your participation will involve two separate 45 minute interviews based on a series of semi-structured questions which are attached. Interviews will be conducted by the researcher at a time and place convenient to you. If preferred, interviews may be conducted by telephone. With your permission, interviews will be recorded. The overall time requirement for you will be one hour for each interview session. Following the first interview, a second interview will be arranged with a view to deepening the inquiry. First and second sets of interview questions will be drawn from the overall headings presented in the outline of interview questions attached.



Data will not contain any personal information about you, other than your gender, age and location. The interview questions will include responses about your professional roles and responsibilities and academic achievements. All data will be anonymous and will be stored securely and will be destroyed on completion of the project. No names of people, organisations or places will be included in participant interviews to ensure that no links can be made between data and your name or details.

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary and you may decide not to participate at any stage in the study with no penalty. In addition, you may choose not to respond to particular interview questions, by notifying the interviewer. There are no known risks for you in this study.

**The University of Dundee Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved the study.**

I would be pleased to answer any questions you have about the study. My contact details are: Kate Martin, OMS 4.05, School of Education, Social Work & Community Education, University of Dundee, Nethergate, Dundee. DD1 4HN Email: k.martin@dundee.ac.uk Tel 01382 381555.

### **Research Proposal Appendix 3: Participant Informed Consent Sheet**

**Project title: Crossing boundaries between work and learning in higher education accredited continuing professional development.**

By signing below, you are agreeing that you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet and that you agree to take part in this study.

Name (printed)

Participant's signature

Date:

Person obtaining consent: *Kate Martin*

Date:

I agree to the use of anonymous extracts from my interview in  
conference papers and academic publications  
I agree to the audio recording of the interview

YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

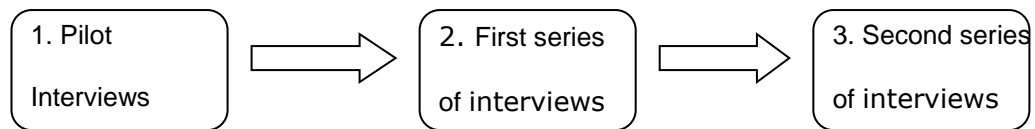
Please return this completed and signed consent form by email to *k.martin@dundee.ac.uk* or by post to Kate Martin, School of Education, Social Work and Community Education, University of Dundee, Nethergate, Dundee DD1 4HN.

## Research Proposal Appendix 4: Interview Questions

### Crossing Boundaries between Work and Learning

#### Interview Questions

This study aims to investigate the boundaries between work and learning. The study involves three stages:



The initial and first series of interviews will involve questions about contexts of work, qualifications and motivations. Open questions about boundaries and linkage between work and learning will be posed to enable subject and context specific responses and perspectives, using open approaches such as “tell me about (eg) your job”. Explanation of key terms (eg boundaries) will be prepared for respondents.

Questions detailed below may be used as prompts to encourage respondents to give a narrative account of motivations and progressions in work and learning. For the second series of interviews, it is anticipated that themes drawn from literature will inform a theoretical model which explores connections between contradiction, deliberation, habit and collaboration in relation to three aspects of work place learning delineated in Habermas’s (1971) technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge constitutive interests. Emergent themes from pilot and first interviews will inform specific questions for deepening inquiry, based on the framework outlined below. Context and concept questions will form the basis of in depth interviews. Respondents will be asked if a second interview can be conducted to follow up on specific questions, if required.

#### Context Questions

##### 1. Workplace Role(s)

- What is your current job? What motivated you towards this choice of job/career?
- How did you learn to do your job – initially? On an ongoing basis?
- What roles and responsibilities do you have? How do you make decisions in your work, and how do you know what is the right decision?
- What learning processes do you generally use in your workplace, and why?

##### 2. Qualifications

- What qualifications did you undertake for this job?

- While in work, what higher education accredited study have you undertaken?
- What motivated you to undertake this study?
- What learning processes formed the basis of your academic studies, and why?
- What ethical approaches have you used in academic work? To what extent did these approaches correspond with your workplace and professional codes of ethics?

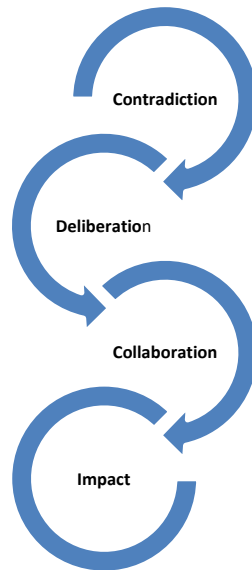
### 3. Professional CPD

- What professional body (if any) are you affiliated to and/or registered with?
- What professional CPD are you required to undertake, and why?
- How, and why, is CPD reported?
- What learning processes are involved in CPD?

### Concept Questions

In the diagram presented, interlinked concepts of contradiction, deliberation (or reflective judgment); collaboration and impact are presented as four key aspects in literatures which draw from social constructivist ideas about learning. The following questions will be posed around these four concepts.

1. **Contradiction:** thinking about crossing boundaries between work and learning, can you comment on any contradictions which occur in your work, and or HE study. To what extent does your learning experience stems from contradictions? Can you give examples?
2. **Deliberation:** can you comment on ways in which deliberation in relation to work and study contributes to learning at work and learning through study? Can you give examples?
3. **Collaboration:** can you comment on any collaboration which occur in your work, and or HE study. To what extent does your learning experience stems from collaboration with others? Can you give examples?
4. **Impact:** again thinking about crossing boundaries between work and learning, can you comment on the impact of your HE study on your work, on that of work colleagues, on workforce growth and/or development of your profession. How relevant is impact to your workplace learning, professional development and academic study? Can you give examples?



### Boundary questions

To summarise: what boundaries exist in your experience between work, professional development and accredited academic learning? What processes might enhance synergies between work, professional development and academic study?

**Note:** These four concepts are drawn from an initial investigation of literature on levels and models of social constructivist approaches to learning (Habermas, 1971; Bateson, 1972; Argyris & Schön, 1974, 1996; Bourdieu, 1977, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978; Engeström, 2009). The literature review for this project and themes from documentary analysis will inform a model based on inter-relationships between these four concepts. The model will be presented to participants together with an outline of key definitions and concepts in order to present a baseline for deliberative and expansive dialogue about potential means of bridging boundaries between work and learning. Emergent themes from interviews questions may inform the concepts and design of the model.

KM 3.13 (Revised 4.14)

### Research Proposal Appendix 5

### Ethics Committee (UREC) Approval Emails

From: Astrid Schloerscheidt  
 Sent: 10 June 2013 10:58  
 To: Kate Martin  
 Cc: Astrid Schloerscheidt; ElizaE Evans  
 Subject: Re: UREC 13058 - approved  
 Dear Kate,  
**Many thanks for sending the revision. Your study is approved.**  
 Best,  
 Astrid  
 Dr Astrid Schloerscheidt  
 Chair, University of Dundee Research Ethics Committee.